PROMOTION OF JOSEPH

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THE

LIFE

OF

JOSEPH,

THE

SON OF ISRAEL.

IN EIGHT BOOKS.

Chiefly designed to allure young Minds to a Love of the Sacred Scriptures.

By JOHN MACGOWAN.

DOVER, N. H.
Printed by SAMUEL BRAGG, *jun. at the* SUN OFFICE.
1800.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE *following History of the Life of* JOSEPH *was forwarded to me by a friend in London. On peruſing it, and finding the Engliſh edition out of print, a number of perſons have expreſſed an earneſt wiſh of ſeeing an American impreſſion of it. In my opinion, it is well calculated to inſtruct and entertain the riſing generation, and as ſuch will, I truſt, be deemed an uſeful book in our public ſchools.—The* BIBLE *is an exhauſtible treaſury of divine truth: whatever, therefore, is canducive towards promoting a love for that bleſſed volume in the youthful mind, will undoubtedly meet with the patronage of the ſeriouſly diſpoſed of every Chriſtian denomination—The author was a much eſteemed Miniſter of the goſpel in London, and, had he lived, would have proſecuted his* PIOUS

plan. Well acquainted with his excellent character, I could not, after being repeatedly requested, any longer deny the present editor these few lines, expressive of my warmest approbation of this valuable work; sensible that it only wants to be known in the United States in order to be admired.*

WILLIAN ROGERS, D. D.

Professor of English and Oratory in the College and Academy of Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA, 1 NO 61

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* *See the close of the Preface.*

PREFACE.

WHEN a new book is uſhered into the world, if it has the happineſs either to pleaſe or diſpleaſe, there is great enquiry made after the author: And as I think it would be a pity to forbid the world this pleaſing itch of enquiry, I forbear putting my name to the *Life of Joſeph* till ſuch time as this curioſity hath in ſome meaſure ſpent itſelf. Yet not to leave the reader altogether in the dark about who and what the author is, I ſhall give him a negative or two.

1. He is not then a writer who cannot err, for he thinks it poſſible for him now and then to be guilty of miſtakes, in ſentiment as well as literature. Conſequently,

2. He is none of that claſs whoſe *ipſe dixit* is the pure ſtandard of orthodoxy. But he has one thing to ſay for himſelf, which will weigh a great deal with people of ſenſe and candour, and that is, that the *Life of Joſeph* is wrote as well as he could do it, for could he have done it better, he had never ſent it into the world as it was; for it was not wreſted from him by force; neither got out of his hands by clandeſtine means; by thoſe who were eager to ſee it in print, before he had time to put the finiſhing hand to it, as has

been the unhappineſs of ſome other authors. He can aſſure the reader, that had his ability bore any tolerable proportion to his time and opportunity, the preſent production had been without a blemiſh.

But what did I chooſe any part of ſacred hiſtory for my theme, will be next aſked? Did you not know that the bible has been laid in a great meaſure aſide for many years paſt? and that the people of faſhion will contemn it, if it was for nothing elſe but being akin to ſcripture? Yes, I know it very well; but becauſe I have not ſeen a better book ſubſtituted in its room, I would gladly have the uſe of the bible revived again. If writers were all agreed to keep the bible ſubjects, of courſe the readers muſt; for they can only ramble, as they are led by their author. The ſacred volume is fertile of ſubjects, calculated both to pleaſe and inſtruct; when let down, by proper elucidation, within the reach of young capacities. And rather than one claſs of readers ſhould want entertainment, let me tell them, that the bible contains many hiſtories of love affairs. Perhaps this may tend more to recommend it to attention, than all beſides, which I could ſay.

I have ſometimes thought, that, if inſtead of uſeleſs controverſies, upon points which the infinitely wiſe God never intended to be clearly underſtood in this life, gentlemen of ſacred character were to employ their leiſure hours

in rendering ſome part of divine hiſtory pleaſing, and eaſy to be underſtood by young ones, their lives would be ſpent to much greater advantage than they frequently are. Much time and pains have been taken; much zeal, as hot as Smithfield fire, has diſcovered itſelf in defending that which never was revealed; and in explaining that which is inexplicable; and many a flaming curſe has been thundered againſt thoſe heretics, who would not believe but upon evidence given. Whether my writing the Life of Joſeph is not a leſs abuſe, both of the world and of my own precious time, I leave to the reader to determine.

Well, but what induced you to ſet about writing this ſame Life of Joſeph? I tell you honeſtly then, that I was not prayed and intreated to do it, by people who thought me maſter of the ſubject, as has been the caſe with more reſpectable writers: for no one perſon ever hinted ſuch an opinion of me. But I wrote it merely to pleaſe myſelf, as the firſt party concerned; and had fully gained my end, had I been as well pleaſed with my own performance as I was with the ſubject.

And pray what induced you to publiſh it, ſeeing the world is already burthened with more books than ever will be read? In this alſo I differ very widely from many of my brother authors, ſome of whom ſeem to be objects of our warmeſt pity. I have grieved, or might have grieved, at the heavy com-

plaints of ſome authors whoſe labours have been taken from them as it were by force of arms. Such was the importunity of friends, who had ſeen the manuſcript, to have it publiſhed; that they could not poſſibly refuſe to gratify them, however reluctant they were to appear in print in ſo diſcerning an age. But, alas! I cannot pay this compliment to the Life of Joſeph; for to tell the truth, no one creature ever deſired me to ſend it abroad, or ſo much as to read one page of it in manuſcript. The whole affair was ſettled betwixt my honeſt, and ſince then very unhappy bookſeller.* Certainly thoſe friends act in a very unfriendly manner, who oblige a modeſt author, contrary to his ſtrongeſt reſolutions, to print a performance which he has ſuch a very mean opinion of himſelf, and to expoſe his reputation in genius and literature to the hazard of being bandied about, throughout the whole nation by thoſe too mercileſs ſets of waggiſh reviewers; who make nothing at all of laughing at human folly. Were my friends wicked enough to expoſe me to ſuch diſagreeable hardſhips, I ſhould certainly renounce their friendſhip forever. I might indeed ſay that the Life of Joſeph is *publiſhed by requeſt*, if I thought it would promote the ſale of it; but then I ſhould mean the requeſt of my

* Mr. Joſeph Johnſon, lately burned to the ground in Paternoſter-Row, and uninſured.

bookſeller, who had ſome hope of making a few pounds by it, if publiſhed. But Joſeph ſhall go without diſguiſe, whether it ſucceed or not.

What is the moſt wonderful of all in me is, I am not afraid to appear in print, even in this age, diſcerning as it is: not that I think myſelf cenſure proof; very far from it. But I have a reaſon more formidable, and which effectually ſecures me from apprehending any evil at the hand of the critic; and that other authors may attain the ſame happineſs, I ſhall reveal the important ſecret to them. And it is this. I ſhall be glad to have every fault in the performance pointed out, that I may make the ſecond impreſſion more perfect than the firſt; therefore the more curious they are in noting its defects, and candid in communicating them to me, the more ſhall I deem the critics my friends.

Having given an account of myſelf ſufficient to ſatisfy any reaſonable reader, I proceed to obſerve that I have a claſs of people in my eye, and for whoſe ſakes chiefly this little performance is ſent abroad, amongſt whom I hope to have even ſome admirers. I mean the young and riſing generation, whoſe felicity I hope I can ſay I have very much at heart. If I can but get their good opinion, I care not who elſe ſnarl at the Life of Joſeph. I have been much converſant with the geniuſſes and tempers of young ones, both in my own family of

ſeven children, and in a much larger ſphere of action; and have had frequent occaſion to mark with regret, that the harſh and ſevere methods which many take with a view to form the young mind to agreeable habits, have quite the contrary tendency. I have an utter averſion to the crabbed countenance of the cynical pedagogue, who has no other way of imparting inſtruction but upon the end of his cane, or face of his ferula. If the terrible man, and terrible he is to the little lovely creatures, who ſhrink as they were into nothing, and ſhudder at his tremendous menace, would only conſider that it is impoſſible to divide hatred from ſervile fear; he would perhaps ſee it neceſſary to aim at gaining the affection of his young pupils, in order to inſure his own ſucceſs. Or if he himſelf would go to ſchool to common ſenſe, and learn to dreſs virtue in its native attractions, and learning in its own innate lovelineſs, he might ſpare the labour of the cane and ferula, enjoy the love and eſteem of his pupils, inſtead of their dread and hatred; and return them to their parents good proficients in uſeful learning, inſtead of branding them with the infamous name of dunce. A name however, that always proclaims the maſter's incapacity to teach; and but very ſeldom want of ability in the boy to learn. Want of ability to learn is very rarely the caſe; and want of inclination would be much ſeldomer found than it

is, if care was taken to entertain the fancy whilſt we would inform the underſtanding.—If learning was made to reſemble play rather than ſlavery, it would become a pleaſure inſtead of a burden. I never yet found that I could ſucceed by mere precept and penalty; but if I was happy enough to hit upon the turn of my pupils fancy, I never failed of the deſired ſucceſs. Fancy is an active principle and will be employed, though in different ſubjects it operates variouſly.

The Life of Joſeph is deſigned to entertain my young reader, without vitiating his mind; by ſetting before him one of the moſt amiable of ſacred characters, in the perſon of Joſeph, the hero of the ſtory. I am not aware of having at all departed from the ſpirit of the text, nor from the rules of probability. I have indeed ventured upon a few conjectures and fictitious poſſibilities, which ſome very grave reader may perhaps be offended with; but in this I am kept in countenance by the moſt orthodox of our commentators, who all have their ſuppoſitions and conjectures on many places of ſacred ſcripture. It may be, my young reader could even wiſh that I had more enlarged upon the fanciful part of the ſtory. To him I would make this apology for myſelf.—I wrote with caution, always keeping in my eye the people above referred to, and was cautions of offending them; for I know that it is poſſible for a man to be

deemed an heretic, for a few things which to them appear to be new and out of the beaten tract of orthodoxy; therefore I had a reſtraint upon my own inclination, which otherwiſe would have led me to give a free ſcope to my fancy.

Should the Life of Joſeph, the ſon of Iſrael, be acceptable to thoſe for whom it is deſigned, I am not certain that I ſhall not ſend ſomething more of the ſame kind abroad into the world.

I NO 61

THE

THE

LIFE

OF

JOSEPH.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ARGUMENT.

JACOB entertains his family with the history of his own life and that of his fathers—Joseph's private reflections upon it—His first dream—His brethren's envy on account of it—Judah and Simeon's different reflections upon Joseph's dream—Reuben endeavours to remove their jealousy—Belphegor's resolution to blow the flame—Simeon's dream inspired by that devil—Joseph's second dream—His brethren's resolution to murder him—The patriarch's care about his sons—Joseph sent to enquire after their welfare—A Canaanite finds him and invites him to his tent, where he tarries till morning. and dreams an alarming dream—He departs for Dothan—His brethren consult about putting him to death—Reuben interposeth, is exposed to danger from their resentment, and is upbraided with defiling his father's bed—Joseph intercedes for his life in vain—Recites his last alarming dream in order to move their pity—Reuben dissembles with a view to divert his brethren's purpose and persuades them to cast him into a pit—Joseph's prayer in the pit; Abel the protomartyr appears to him, comforts and instructs him.

BOOK I.

IT was at the end of autumn, when the bounties of providence were ſafely gathered in, that venerable Jacob entertained his convened family with the hiſtory of his own life, and the lives of his father Iſaac, and Abraham his grandfather. A ſtory ſo full of intereſting incidents, related in a manner truly pathetic, ſometimes excited the friendly tear, and at others the cheerful ſmile, upon the countenances of his audience. None was more affected than pious Joſeph, who ſeemed earneſtly to catch every ſyllable in the narration; little Benjamin indeed marking the emotions of his brethren's hearts, by their countenances, gave undoubted tokens of filial piety, as well as his elders. Joſeph, lovely Rachel's eldeſt born, was abſorbed in contemplating the viciſſitudes experienced by his reverend parent, and could not forbear ſympathiſing with him in every part of the hiſtory, whilſt tears bright as orient pearls ran down his cheek. Even when alone he could not but ruminate on the wiſdom and goodneſs of the God of heaven, in ſetting virtuous Jacob before Eſau the prophane; not-

withſtanding nature and Iſaac's choice ſeemed to have deſigned otherwiſe. Says he to himſelf, when alone, "raw and unexperienced as I am, young and untaught either in the myſteries of religion, or the mazes of deceit among men of this world, I can ſee a very wide difference between my father and my uncle Eſau. A greater difference there was not between the roughneſs of the latter, and the delicacy of the former, when examined by experienced Iſaac's careful touch, than there is between their two minds, formed ſo very different from one another. And who made, or could make the difference but God, from whom the ſpirit of life originally came, and who formed them both in the ſame maternal womb. I adore thee, O my God, that the promiſe is with my father Jacob." Often did he reflect with pleaſure and delight on the gracious viſits, which the patriarch received from the Almighty at Bethel and Peniel. "Oh, ſaid he, that this ſame God, the God of my father, may be with me even as he hath been with him! that this God may be my God in the land of the living, and my guide and portion for ever and ever."

Thus meditating on the changes through which providence had brought his father, and earneſtly imploring grace to imitate the patriarchal conduct, he was ſeized by the lulling charms of balmy reſt, and ſunk beneath the ſuperiority of the angel of drowſineſs. As he

ſlept he dreamed, and lo! all his brethren and he were together in the neighbouring field, laborioufly reaping the nodding harveſt; when to his amazement, the ſheaf which he had laſt reaped ſtood upright in the midſt, as a governor; and his brethrens ſheaves, as ſo many loyal ſubjects, haſtened to pay their court, falling down proſtrate before it. Unacquainted with malice and envy, and not knowing but his brethren were as free from it as himſelf, he very innocently told them his dream; but alas! the diſtinguiſhed regard at all times ſhewed him by his indulgent parent, had already called up the demons of malice and envy to poſſeſs their unequal hearts. They heard him with attention, and felt the impreſſion in their hearts, but could not hinder the diſagreeable ſenſation from diſcovering itſelf on their countenances; ſo ſure an index is the countenance to the heart. He, as a youth who loves inſtruction, aſked them what could be the meaning of ſuch a dream? But they diſguiſed their apprehenſions, and with affected diſdain turned from him, telling him they underſtood nothing of the matter. But no ſooner was he departed from them, than they entered into a conſultation among themſelves relating to the affair. Judah firſt began, "my brethren, ſaid he, the dream which the youth has related to us, however innocent and thoughtleſs he may be reſpecting the event,

appears to me ſomething more than the influence of mere imagination; and if my judgment is not miſlead, it is ominous of ſuperior dignity in the perſon of Joſeph, or the dominion of his ſeed over the children of his father." "For my own part, returned Simeon, I conſider the whole as the fruit of ambition, you know he has been foſtered up in a vain conceit of himſelf, by the overweening fondneſs of an indulgent and doting parent. Seeing himſelf placed firſt in the paternal affection, who knows but his pretended dream is a ſcheme concerted to root himſelf the deeper in his father's heart, with a view to ſupplant us of the patriarchal bleſſing, as our father did our uncle Eſau? Or, if he really did dream what he has now related, is it not pretty plain from thence, that it is owing to his mind running upon the wiſhed for dominion?" Reuben now rejoined his brother Simeon thus, "the patriarch's partiality towards Joſeph can never be juſtified, for if brethren are expected to dwell in unity, there muſt be an equality among them; partiality in a parent being the ſeed of certain diſſentions among his children. Yet we ought to do the boy juſtice, he is truly lovely in his perſon; even in his opening graces you may ſee all the beauty of his mother, mingled with the maſculine gravity of our renowned father: beſides, his temper is amiable and mild, his manners ſweet and attractive; let us not then load the good man with re-

proach, even if he ſhould love our brother with ſuperior regard. Our father was put before his elder brother, and thereby the promiſe deſcends to us, let us not, then, too haſtily condemn the youth, before we know what the Almighty will do with him."

THUS reaſoned the ſons of Jacob, whilſt Belphegor an angel of the damned race, implacable in his hatred againſt mankind in general, and eſpecially againſt the children of the promiſe, returning from a deteſtable incurſion in the neighbourhood of Jeruſalem, drew near and hovered in the air over their heads, to acquaint himſelf with their circumſtances, the better to embitter their lot, if not precipitate them into ruin. He was a witneſs to the perturbation of Simeon's heart, and reſolved that the flame already kindled ſhould not die, whilſt it was in his power to throw oil upon it. What the malignant ſpirit aimed at, was to excite him to embrue his hands in Joſeph's youthful blood, as before he had done in that of the Shechemites; which, as he concluded, if executed, would anſwer infernal purpoſes in divers reſpects; that it would bring down the holy patriarch with ſorrow to the grave; it would bring an everlaſting reproach upon the choſen race; and, it might provoke a juſt God to viſit them with ſome terrible judgment. To accompliſh this with the greater facility, he reſolved to impoſe upon his ſenſes by a dream; for which

purpoſe he watched him in his tent, and perceiving him in a deep ſleep, he firſt breathed upon his eyes an helliſh damp, that diffuſed darkneſs and horror through his whole ſoul. Then, directing his views to futurity, he diſcovered Joſeph in a chair of State, himſelf and his brethren proſtrate before him, intreating mercy at his hand; by and by he finds himſelf bound in fetters, in the preſence of his brethren, and caſt in a dungeon; now he ſees his own ſeed the drudging menials of the ſeed of Joſeph. The name of Joſeph is extolled to the heavens, and thoſe of his brethren mentioned but with coolneſs, and ſome of them particularly his own, with abhorrence. Withal he ſaw the behaviour of Joſeph's children to be haughty and tyrannical to their enſlaved brethren. So did the parent of error miſlead his judgment, by the deluſion of an hell inſpired dream. Simeon awoke in the morning, and addreſt himſelf to his paſtoral care, following the fleecy race as they cropped the verdant herbage; but a ſullen penſiveneſs was ſettled on his countenance, the cauſe of which he choſe not as yet to reveal.

In the mean while Joſeph grew in ſtature, in the affection of his father, and fear of his God. And ere long he dreamed again, a dream of the ſame import with the former. He fancied himſelf in a pleaſant meadow, covered with the freſheſt verdure, beſpangled

with the many coloured ſtains of natural dye; the lion, the leopard, and panther, were hid in ſilence, in their loneſome retreats; —their noctural prowlings in the deſart were ſuſpended, and only the voice of the nightengale was heard. As he walked along, admiring the beauties of nature and adoring the ſupreme Creator, he perceived an uncommon motion among the celeſtial ſpheres; the ſun, the moon and the ſeven ſtars, flew ſwiftly from their orbits, and came and made obeiſance to him. The next day after evening oblations were offered up, and Jacob's family convened to ſupper, ſuch as the ſimplicy of thoſe days admitted of: unſuſpecting Joſeph told his dream before them all. His father heard with thoughtful attention, yet deemed it prudent to conceal for the preſent his thoughts, not knowing what envy it might excite among his brethren; and therefore gave him a ſlight rebuke, by ſaying, "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourſelves to thee, to the earth?" The dream and interpretation of it had both taken poſſeſſion of the patriarch's mind, and, notwithſtanding his reproof to Joſeph he pondered it in his heart, and conſidered it as divinely inſpired, portending ſome important event.

It was quite otherwiſe with Joſeph's brethren: this laſt brought the former dream afreſh into their minds, and they began to fancy themſelves as almoſt in ſervitude to their

brother already. The repetition of the dream encreaſed their envy, and alarmed their apprehenſions: eſpecially when Simeon, who had concealed his dream until now, had related it to them. They conſidered the whole as fixed by fate, and ſaw but one way to prevent the execution of the decree; and that was (horrid to name) to cut ſhort his period of life; as if there had not been blood enough already upon their guilty ſouls. Strange indeed that parents of the choſen ſeed, ſhould be found contending with their God, and ſtriving to prevent the execution of his purpoſes! How unſearchable are the ways of the Moſt High! and his judgments paſt finding out!

THEY now departed to their rural employments, firſt to Shechem, where the herbage was ſoon devoured, and from thence to Dothan, where there was plenty of graſs, and ſhelter for their cattle. Unfurniſhed with that dutiful regard, due to ſo good a father, their departure was concealed from him; whether from thoughtleſſneſs, or with a view to find occaſion to deſtroy Joſeph, I pretend not to ſay: but their abſence filled the patriarch's mind with ſolicitous concern for their welfare, wherefore, he reſolved to ſend his beloved Joſeph in queſt of them, to learn their ſituation. In the mean while, being arrived in Dothan, they conſult together what methods to take to prevent the grandeur of their deteſted brother, and his death was determined

on by the majority. Thus ſin at firſt diſcovered itſelf to be exceeding ſinful by the horrid act of fratricide, and now the iſſue of this counſel was, that brethren ſhould ſhed their brother's blood, and without ſo much as the allegation of guilt againſt him.

JOSEPH was diſpatched by his father to enquire after the health of his brethren, a taſk which was extremely agreeable to a mind like his, formed to offices of benevolence. Firſt he went to Shechem, where he expected to have found them, but inſtead of them he met with a ſtranger, who, ſeeing a comely young man wandering in the fields, drew near and thus accoſted him :—"Young man, if I miſtake not you are a ſtranger in theſe parts, wandering in queſt of ſome deſired object; I am a native of this country, and if you will be pleaſed to command me, I am ready to ſerve you to the utmoſt of my power. It is the will of heaven that we ſhould not be neglectful of ſtrangers, but perform all offices of good-will towards them, and we find our account in obeying the precept, for the God of heaven is the guardian of ſtrangers." Joſeph, affected with the goodwill of this ſtranger, meekly replied, "My friend, for ſuch your ſentiments beſpeak you, I am here at this time in ſearch of my brethren, who ſhould be feeding their flocks near to this place, I ſhall take it kind if you can inform me whereabouts they are." "If replied the ſtranger, you mean the ten

ſons of Iſrael, the Hebrew, I can help you in this matter, for it is but three days ſince I was with them on buſineſs; when finding the adjacent paſtures conſumed by their numerous flocks, I heard them conclude upon going to Dothan, where the earth produced herbage in the richeſt luxuriance."

"If you are brother to theſe godlike ſhepherds, let me prevail with you to refreſh yourſelf in my tent, which is at no great diſtance; and in the morning as ſoon as the cheerful ſun illumines our horizon, you ſhall depart in peace." The day being far advanced, and the ſable evening drawing near, our youthful hero accepted of the kind invitation and ſlept in the tent of the Canaanite. Retiring to reſt, his dreams came into his mind, earneſtly he wiſhed for the interpretation of them; but amidſt his contemplations he fell aſleep, and dreamed one of a very different nature. He fancied himſelf wandering in an unknown field, amidſt the nocturnal gloom; ſun, moon and ſtars, having hid their radiance in the denſity of the atmoſphere, penſive and melancholy, he wandered with painful ſteps, he knew not whither. No voice was heard but that of beaſts of prey, upon their nightly ravages, the growling of the lion, and hooting of the bird of darkneſs, were the only muſick that ſaluted his ear. Ere he was aware, he fell into an horrible pit, inhabited by hiſſing ſnakes, and other deadly reptiles; and in the

ſall, his many coloured coat was torn peace-meal, and hung upon the buſhes over him.—He had but juſt reached the bottom when two monſtrous adders warped themſelves about his legs, which frightened him ſo that he awoke and rejoiced that it was but a dream. Some benevolent ſpirit of the ethereal race, having heard the malevolent conſultations of his brethren, might take this method of apprizing him of ſome danger near at hand, that he might guard himſelf againſt their bloody deſigns. But Joſeph's friendly heart was incapable of ſuſpicion. He would have deemed it a crime in him never to be forgiven, to have entertained, but for a moment, the leaſt jealouſy of their humanity. Had integrity and uprightneſs equally governed the reſt of thy ſons, O Jacob! what ſcenes of ſorrow wouldſt thou have eſcaped, and how gently would time have conducted thee through the decline of life.

THE reverſe of Joſeph's diſpoſition was theirs, for the moment they ſaw him afar off, they renewed their determination againſt him to deſtroy him, and by one bold ſtroke to free themſelves from the fear of his future advancement. "According to our wiſh, cried raptured Levi, he comes; behold this dreamer cometh!" returned Simeon, "now is the time brethren, let us put him to death, and ſee what will become of his dreams." "Not ſo, replied Reuben. How ſhall we who have the adoption

and covenant, we who are the ſeed of the promiſe, be guilty of fratricide? What! ſhall we who are called to lift up holy hands, and to offer pure oblations to the God of heaven, ſtain our ſouls with the blood of an innocent brother? Remember brethren, the blood of Abel, cried from the earth to the Lord to whom vengeance belongs, and will not the blood of Joſeph rouſe the wrath of the omnipotent? And who ſhall eſcape when an avenging God purſueth? Is our father partial in favour of the youth, the fault is not with him. Even envy itſelf muſt confeſs his merit. Are his dreams ominous of his future greatneſs? Cannot Joſeph be great without our being ſlaves to him? Shall we ſlay our brother for the licentious rovings of unbridled imagination? Who can anſwer for dreams? Could we even convict him of ambition, might not his youth and inexperience, in ſome meaſure plead his excuſe? Further experience, growing acquaintance, with men and things, would teach him that man is not originally deſigned for ſlavery. Let the old man our father plead for his Joſeph. His life is wrapt up in that of his child. And will you dare to murder the father in the ſon, and pierce his heart through the blood of his Joſeph? Think of our father my brethren, ſee him weeping a deteſted life away over his murdered ſon; murdered by the begotten of his father; murdered by the very men in whom he confided without reſerve.—

Let the fear of God, and the love due to ſo venerable a father, be advocates for his helpleſs youth; and let me never ſee the evil that ſhall by this villainous barbarity be brought upon Iſrael, the favorite of heaven."

"Is this Reuben, with malicious irony, cried Levi, Reuben the firſt born of Jacob? The pious Reuben, who in a phrenzy of brutal luſt crept into his father's bed and defiled it? Where was thy fear of God, thy love and veneration for thy father then? Art thou our dictator? Thou who couldſt not ſpare even thy father's wife, all of a ſudden become ſo pious? Art thou ſo careful for thy father's life, thou who alone hadſt audacity to cuckold him? Let ſhame forever ſhut Reuben's mouth, and leave it to good men to be advocates for virtue."

"YOUR invective, my brother, ſaid Reuben, ſtings me with the keeneſt remorſe. I own the charge to be juſt and cannot forget the evil of my ſin. I have diſhonored my God, my father and myſelf; and have left thereby an indelible-ſtain on my offſpring, to the lateſt generation. But the heavy days and the many ſleepleſs nights, that this foul miſcarriage has coſt me, though they can never extenuate my highly aggravated guilt from before the God of Jacob; might in ſome meaſure exempt me from the upbraidings of my brethren. Believe me, Levi, my own conſcience ſerves as a thouſand reprovers, and needs not your cruel aſſiſtance. Yet it is juſt, my bro-

ther, and I cannot reſent it. But my former impiety is indeed the reaſon wherefore I cannot fall into your bloody meaſures. My conſcience too, loudly tells me that I have guilt enough upon my ſoul already, without contracting more in ſuch an horrid manner as this which Simeon has preſcribed; that I have already been the cauſe of more than enough of ſorrow, to my dear and honored father, without joining in the murder of his ſon, to bring down his venerable hoary head, with inſupportable ſorrow to the grave. He whoſe conſcience groans under the weight of inceſtuous adultery, has little need to add to the burden, the tremendous weight of innocent blood. I cannot therefore conſent to the deed."

"THE indelible ſtain which Reuben, by his own confeſſion, hath fixed on himſelf and offspring, may reconcile the baſeneſs of his mind to ſlavery, ſaid Simeon, but our ſeed is free, and not born to ſervitude. Therefore, Joſeph, by my advice ſhall die; if pious and reformed Reuben, will not conſent to his death he dies along with him. Why ſhould he live to be able to accuſe us to our father? One condition, and only one, if you are all agreed, I would have offered to Reuben; if he agrees to that he lives, and if not, he and Joſeph die together: for he ſhall never be the publiſher of our guilt. Let Reuben become our accomplice, otherwiſe bind himſelf by an oath to the moſt inviolable ſecrecy. By this alone can he

hope to prolong his life. Speak, Reuben, do ye accept the conditions?"

"GIVE me till to-morrow about this time to conſider it, and then you ſhall have my anſwer replied Jacob's elder born."

"ONE hour and no more we grant, at which time we expect your anſwer," rejoined the brethren in wickedneſs.

BY this time Joſeph came nigh to his brethren, and ſmiling with delight at having found them all together, came near to embrace them and inquire after their health. But what inexpreſſible ſurpriſe ſeized him, when inſtead of returning his careſſes, they turned away from him, and ſhook him off, with vengeance louring on their countenances? Inſtantly he is ſeized, ſtript of his rich party coloured coat, and fettered both hands and feet. Alarmed Reuben, cried, "Stop, ſtay your hand but one hour, the hour promiſed and ye ſhall then have my anſwer." All agreed that one hour and no more ſhould be granted, ere Joſeph was put to death; and Reuben caſting a look of deſpair and pity on his fettered brother; "I wiſh ſaid he, your duty to your father, and love to your brethren, could have admitted your ſtaying at home, inſtead of viſiting theſe men who are bent on your deſtruction;" ſo ſaying, he precipitately withdrew to conſider what anſwer he ſhould deliver to his brethren.

THE elder brother gone, and Joſeph encloſed amidſt his ſanguinary brethren, like an helpleſs lamb amongſt ſo many voracious wolves was thus addreſſed by one of them. "Ambitious youth! think now of your ſtate, one hour elapſed and the tide of your ambition is for ever ſtemmed, one hour puts a period to your life, which is forfeited to our liberty.—Die you muſt and ſhall, if fate had decreed the contrary." He replied, "had I known the malignity of your intentions, I might have avoided the ſnare; but duty to my father, and to my brethren, and therefore duty to my God brings me here; if he hath led me hither for ſlaughter, I ought, I muſt ſubmit, but if my God ſees it for the honor of his majeſty to preſerve me, he hath power to change your purpoſes, as he turneth the rivers of water; or may point out means whereby I may be delivered from your vengeance. Tell me what I have done: wherein I have offended you: if I have erred, it is unwittingly, and it is hard to be put to death for inadvertency. Make known my faults, and if I reform them not, let looſe your fury upon me. But I adjure you by the God of Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, that ye ſlay me not unconvicted. If I have wronged any of you, I am willing to make reſtitution to the utmoſt: if I have offended, to ſubmit myſelf, and to implore forgiveneſs, but O cut me not off in my youth, before I arrive at the ſtate of manhood!" "yes, young-

ſter, replied Simeon, you have wronged us ſo, that you cannot make reſtitution. You have ſtolen the affections of a partial father, which you cannot reſtore: you have ſet yourſelf up by your pretended dreams, as our lord and governor; you have made us and our children, yea, and our father himſelf to do homage to your pride; but we ſhall ſoon ſee what your greatneſs will come to. You ſhall not live to triumph over your enſlaved brethren: die you muſt."

"ALAS! muſt I then die for my dreams! which of you has the government of his fancy whilſt aſleep. Oh, Simeon, my brother Simeon, could I help my dreams? I little thought that they would have given offence to any of you, when I innocently related them. I want no ſuperiority, I account, myſelf unworthy even of equal regard, much more ſo of ſuperior eſteem. If my father ſhows any partiality towards me, it is for my mother's ſake, and not for any thing in me. And muſt I die for any partiality in my father? Make the caſe your own, my dear Simeon, would you like to be put to death for any rovings of your dreaming imagination? To be murdered in cold blood for what you could not poſſibly help? If I muſt die for having dreamed a dream, which you think portends felicity and greatneſs, give me leave to relate to you one that I dreamed laſt night: if the former excited your anger and reſentment, the latter may

as juſtly entitle me to your compaſſion and ſympathy." Leave obtained, he related the dream he had in the tent of the Canaanite, which his brethren heard with riſing indignation; and as ſoon as he had finiſhed, Simeon ſpoke to his brethren, with fury flaſhing from his eyes; "this dream is an artful contrivance of the inſolent wretch to fix a laſting reproach upon us, and upon our ſeed. We, my brethren, are intended by the deadly ſerpents; perhaps I myſelf am meant by one of the adders that warped themſelves about his legs, and wakened him in ſuch a fright; but why do we ſuffer him to prate any longer? One ſtroke of my ſcymeter will put an end to his inſolence. Ambitious wretch! thou ſhalt prate no more." Here he drew his ſword, and ruſhed up to have cloven the ſtripling in twain, but Judah caught him in his arms, and cried, "ſtop, ſtop, my Simeon. Remember the promiſe we have juſt now made to Reuben; wait the time, and let us ſee what reſolution he comes to."

"O JUDAH! cried Joſeph, Judah my honoured brother; thou art he whom thy brethren ſhall praiſe: may I hope to find an interceſſor in thee? What if thy ſons, either Er or Onan, were in the ſame condition in which thou ſeeſt me? How would thy bowels yearn over them? See their diſtreſs in mine: feel my father's affliction in thine own; act a faithful part in delivering me from mine enraged

brethren, who are this day riſen up againſt me without a cauſe. O Judah, let me owe my life, and all the happineſs of it, to a brother ſo honourable in the houſe of his father. And you, O Simeon and Levi, think of the guilt ye will bring upon yourſelves, by perpetrating a deed ſo horrid. Ye may eſcape puniſhment from the hand of man, but aſſure yourſelves ye will not eſcape from the hand of God. For judgment is his, and he will repay it either in this life, or that which is to come,"

THUS Joſeph interceded for a life, now indeed rendered wretched, by the unkind behaviour of his father's ſons: more out of deſire to diſſuade them from contracting freſh guilt, than from any dread he had of death, or what ſhould follow after it. Whilſt Reuben retired behind a neighbouring thicket, to pour out the bitterneſs of his ſoul before God, and pray to be directed what part he ſhould act in the preſent iniquitous affair. How ſhall I act ſaid he? If I conſent, I bring guilt upon my own ſoul and add murder to my inceſt. If I do not conſent, my life is forfeited to the jealouſy of my brethren who will never be eaſy whilſt I am alive, let me be tied to ſecrecy by what oath ſoever. Surrounded by evils, prudence dictates to chuſe the leaſt, that thereby we may eſcape the greater. I muſt at all events endeavour to ſave the boy's life; in order to which I muſt conſent to his death,

and may perhaps win ſo far upon his enemies, as to leave the manner of his death to me.—His heart was divided between the thoughts of his own ſafety and Joſeph's. The ſorrow which he foreſaw ready to fall upon his aged father, and the guilt juſt about to be contracted by his brethren; but ſtill he ſteadily determined to uſe his beſt endeavors for the ſafety of the youth. With this reſolution, although diſſembled, he returned to the reſt ſeemingly with a placid countenance; and thus addreſſed them. My brethren, I am now ready to concur with your meaſures, and even to be active therein, upon one ſmall condition being granted me, which is, that inſtead of ſhedding of his blood, we confine him till death in yonder pit, on the other ſide of the paſture." Agreed, replied his brethren. So that he dies, no matter how. And hereby Reuben makes himſelf not only an accomplice, but a principal actor in the tragedy. Away with him to the pit, and there let the ſun, moon, and ſtars, pay their court to him as their governor."

At this inſtant, they hurried him away to the propoſed pit, whilſt he in anguiſh of heart, ſummoned them all to meet him hereafter before the judgment ſeat of the king of kings, where he aſſured them he ſhould have juſtice done him. This appeal he deſigned as a means of conviction, whereby his brethren might be brought to repentance that their ſins

might be blotted out, when times of refreſhing ſhould come from the preſence of the Lord.

JOSEPH, now let down into the pit; Reuben rejoiced in hope of having it in his power to deliver him ſafe the enſuing night to his good old father; whoſe heart he knew muſt pant with painful anxiety till his return. Having determined upon this ſalutary project, he left him there and went to diſpatch ſome paſtoral buſineſs among the menial herdsmen, at a different part of the wilderneſs, propoſing ere long to return. In the mean while, Joſeph having nothing but death to expect, and hardly even deſiring any thing elſe, lift up his ſoul in fervent prayer to the God of his ſalvation. "Thou God," he cried, "whoſe preſence fills immenſity itſelf, whoſe eyes ſee and whoſe eye-lids try the actions and hearts of men; thou muſt of neceſſity be preſent here, and witneſs to all my treatment from my brethren. So far as the appointment is thine, I deſire cheerfully to ſubmit to it, and own thy conduct juſt, as I have deſerved a thouſand deaths ere now. But Lord my brethren's motives differ from thine as far as eaſt from weſt, for envy do they now riſe up againſt me. Here I am in all appearance ſhut up for certain death. My God, let not my blood be charged upon the ſons of my father. My God forgive their iniquity. And O Lord do thou ſupport my aged father under the pangs of ſorrow, which he will from

his paternal fondneſs neceſſarily feel. Support him, O my God, and give him to bear his affliction in my loſs, becoming the parent of the choſen race. Here I am, thou God of heaven and earth. I muſt die if thou interpoſeſt not. If death is deſigned for me, help me to bear it with humble reſignation; but Lord, if thou pleaſeſt to prolong a life altogether inſignificant, thou haſt the means in thine own hand. Uſe them as will be moſt for thy glory." Here he was ſurpriſed by an uncommon radiance which diffuſed itſelf through the place. A ſplendor which overcame him with the ſweeteſt ſenſation, and gave his enraptured ſoul a large taſte of ethereal felicity. The amazing brightneſs a little diminiſhed, ſo far as to enable mortal eyes to endure it, there ſtood a blooming youth conſeſt to his view. The inſtant the celeſtial viſitant diſcovered himſelf, he thus accoſted the ſon of Jacob. "I am ſent, by my God and thine am I ſent, to inform thee that he is well acquainted with all thy afflictions and perfectly knows thy preſent diſtreſs. Not Jehovah only, but the hoſts of heaven, in general are witneſſes of thy miſery. The celeſtial legions bowed over the brow of heaven, and beheld the baleful deed with as much uneaſineſs and fearful apprehenſions for thee, as celeſtial ſpirits are capable of, till the purpoſe of the eternal was revealed. But this calmed every mind and the ſovereign will of thy God, reconciled

in an inſtant the will of miriads. I am Abel the protomartyr. I fell, my Joſeph, by the hand of my brother Cain, and the day of my fall was the day of my exaltation. O Joſeph, did you but know the joys prepared for thoſe that love the Lord, you would not wiſh to prolong life a moment. But your time is not come. You are deſigned to foſter infant Iſrael under the ſhadow of your wings. You muſt be ſold into Egypt, to govern that fertile land, and provide ſuſtenance for the ſeed of the promiſe. Even to day you muſt be gone, for thy God makes uſe of thy brethren's jealouſy for this very purpoſe. Only remember that when thou art in Egypt thou wilt be tempted, but keep it ever in thy mind that the God of the Hebrews ſent thee thither. There ſhall thy brethren bow down to thee. There ſhalt thou embrace thy father, and there ſhall Benjamin fall upon thy neck and ſhed the fraternal tear. Be not careful about thy father's affliction. Leave him to his God, he ſhall be ſupported and brought through. When the day is thine think well of thy brother Reuben, he had thee here purpoſely to deliver thee, but he muſt ſee thee no more, till you meet in the court of Pharaoh. I leave thee Joſeph, the peace of thy God go with thee.

THE

LIFE

OF

JOSEPH.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ARGUMENT.

JOSEPH *taken out of the pit—Sold to Alvah an Iſhmaelite—Reuben returns to the pit—His ſorrow and deſpair on miſſing Joſeph—His lamentation—He chargeth the murder upon his brethren—Judah repents of what was done and informs Reuben—They ſend out meſſengers to overtake him and bring him back—An angel appears to Reuben and comforts him—They dip Joſeph's coat in blood and ſend it to Jacob—Jacob's grief and Dinah's deſpair—Joſeph's arrival in Egypt—The friendly treatment he meets with from Alvah—He chooſeth to abide in Egypt—Potiphar ſees him on the mart and conceives a liking to him—Purchaſes him and preſents him to Sabrina his new married lady—A grand hunting match in the deſart—Joſeph kills a lion and delivers his miſtreſs—Sabrina conceives a violent paſſion for him—Gabriel inſpires Joſeph with a dream ominous of danger—His proſperity—Joſeph ſaves his miſtreſs a ſecond time from a band of Arabs——His miſtreſſe's paſſion thereby greatly inflamed.*

BOOK II.

ABSORBED in thought the ſon of Iſrael lay, after the heavenly viſion was departed, when Judah came to the brim of the pit, and calling Joſeph by name, let down a rope which he ordered him to tie about his body below his arms, then he and his brethren drew him out of the pit, and led him to a numerous caravan of merchants, going from Gilead to Egypt, with myrrh, balm and ſpicery. Confident in the word of the heavenly meſſenger he aſcended out of the pit dreading no evil, and ſuffered himſelf to be ſold to Alvah, the chief of the company for twenty pieces of ſilver. The youthful beauty and mature underſtanding of our hero, equally conſpired to endear him to his maſter, who ſoon employed him in the government of his camels, with whom we leave him whilſt we follow Reuben from the diſtant field to the pit. "Joſeph, my brother Joſeph," he cried, but Joſeph made no anſwer, he repeated the doleful invitation, but ſtill no voice was heard. He rent his garments, tore his hair, and roamed about the brink of the pit

in the greateſt anguiſh of ſoul, almoſt to throw himſelf down into it, and die with his loſt brother. At laſt having ſpent himſelf to no purpoſe he called Joſeph's laſt dream to remembrance, and dreaded its being literally fulfilled. Then he thought again, can my brethren have threacherouſly murdered him in the abſence of his friend. O falſe and dreadful brethren! cruel and bloody men! to ſhed the blood of the innocent, contrary to ſolemn contract. Racked with deſpair and glowing reſentment, he reaſoned with himſelf, whether it were not beſt to ruſh upon his brethren and plunge his dagger in each of their hearts, one by one, till he himſelf ſhould periſh upon the points of their ſwords. In one minute he was fully bent upon the bloody purpoſe, in the next, the horrors of an agonizing parent expiring over his murdered family, pierced him to the heart. Then he cried, "O my father, my father, how wretchedly am I deceived? I thought to have been happy in making ſome atonement for my paſt guilt, by delivering thy darling from his murderous brethren, and reſtoring him ſafe to thy fond embrace. But, ah! I am deceived. Joſeph is loſt, irretrieveably loſt. And what ſorrows will wring the heart of my parent, when he learns that Joſeph is no more. O my Joſeph, gladly would I revenge thy blood upon thy murderers. But, alas! the loſs of one is more than enough for a tender parent to bear.

How would his aged heart ſink under the carnage which this arm would make, ſhould I give ſcope to my juſt revenge? But, O my father, my father, for thy ſake I live, and leave it to God to avenge the death of thy ſon. So ſaying, he went up to his brethren, grief and reſentment ſparkling in his eyes."

"FALSE men, where is the lad? Where is Joſeph? Could you not withhold your bloody hand from him for one night that the unhappy youth might have had time to pour out his heart unto his God? But alas! he is gone. And I, whither ſhall I fly? How ſhall I anſwer to his father for his untimely death? What agonies muſt the good man feel, when he hears that Joſeph is no more? O my father! O Joſeph! my poor Joſeph." So ſaying, his over ſwelled heart breaks forth in guſhing ſorrow, which trickled down his manly cheeks like chriſtial waters from the diamond rock. But ſurely never did tears better become the maſculine countenance than now! Such was the anguiſh of Reuben's ſpirit, that like a contagion, his grief reached the hearts of his brethren: and even Simeon himſelf, felt for a moment ſomething like remorſe. A ſolemn ſilence reigned in the whole aſſembly.

JUDAH at laſt broke through the gloom that covered them, and addreſſed Reuben. "My brother, permit your ſorrow to ſubſide, ſuffer your reaſon to ſupercede your paſſion, and coolly hear what I have to offer. I am

now thoroughly convinced that what we have done is wrong, notwithſtanding Joſeph is yet alive." Reuben quickly replied, "If he lives let me ſet my eyes upon him that my heart may be at reſt." "Alas, ſaid Judah, though he lives, I cannot preſent him to you. For I, even I, to ſave his life, adviſed to ſell him to ſome Midianitiſh merchants, who paſſed by here in your abſence. This is done and cannot be undone, or it ſhould. And I am now more convinced than ever that he will live to ſee his dreams fulfilled, and his brethren to bow down unto him. Yes, my brethren, his laſt night's dream has been amply verified, for it may be truly ſaid, he fell into a pit of ſerpents, even in the houſe of his father. I feel within me ſome monitor telling me, that God who weighs the actions of men in an even balance, will viſit and puniſh my having concurred in ſeparating Joſeph from his father and brethren, by the judicial death of my own children. O that it was undone again, and that we had it in our power to reſtore him to his father."

ALL the brethren heartily concurred in Judah's ſentiments, Simeon alone excepted, "For his part, he ſaid, all that he grieved at, was, that they had ſuffered him to eſcape, and leave him within the poſſibility of ſuperiority.—When we had him, ſaid he, it was madneſs to let him go." "I would not for the world, ſaid the reſt of his brethren, Sime-

on, that it had been as you would have wiſhed it." But Reuben, flew from his place like lightning, and would inſtantly have killed Simeon; but that Napthali, who perceived from his countenance, the effect that Simeon's ſanguinary ſpeech had made upon his heart, aroſe with the ſwiftneſs of a hind; caught his elder brother by the arm, and begged for Jacob's ſake that he would moderate his paſſion. Again compoſed, the brethren conſult how they may ſtrive to regain their loſt brother. It was agreed to ſend out meſſengers early in the morning, to overtake the Iſhmaelites, offer to Alvah the price given for Joſeph, and as much more as might procure his releaſe. This agreed upon, and meſſengers appointed for the negociation, they all retired to reſt, every one with his ſervants to his ſeparate tent. Reuben was juſt laid down, and ſtriving to compoſe himſelf to reſt, when a dazzling glory ſhone through all the tent, and a voice more than human, called him by name, "Reuben, Reuben, firſt-born of Iſrael, hear my words and attend unto my ſpeech.—You mourn for Joſeph, and not without cauſe, conſidering the occaſion of his exile. But know this, that he is the peculiar care of his God, who is with him wherever he goes, and who will make whatever he does to proſper.—He ſhall find a friend, a father, and brethren in a ſtrange land, where he ſhall dwell ſecurely, till his brethren, unknown to themſelves,

ſhall bow down unto him with the humbleſt ſupplications. For Joſeph ſhall be found.—Thine arms ſhall yet embrace him, Reuben. And the whole world ſhall know him as the nurſing father of the choſen race. Meanwhile, ſecure thine own life, Reuben, by concealing the matter from hoary Iſrael, leſt the rage of thy brethren mix thee untimely with the duſt; for ſome of them are old in bloodſhed, and ſhudder not at human carnage. Obſerve my words and all ſhall be well."

As Phœbus approached the northeaſt verge of this duſky world, and fair Aurora purpled the ſky, the meſſengers ſet out by different ways, to overtake the caravan, they roamed through howling waſtes and ſandy deſerts to no purpoſe, till ſpent with the fatigue of the day; they returned faint and weary on the enſuing night, to their brethren at Dothan. Every countenance diſcovered diſguſt and ſorrow; even Simeon could have wiſhed for Joſeph's return. Reuben alone maintained a placid countenance, to the ſurpriſe of all his brethren who ſaw his rage and deſpair ſo ſuddenly turned into calm ſerenity. He ſaid, "Come, my brethren, let us leave off caring for Joſeph. The pious youth is the care of his God who will never forſake the needy in their affliction. Let us concert ſome meaſures to ſupport our good old father under the heavy weight of affliction, juſt falling upon his venerable head. O Jacob!

revered old man, my heart bleeds for thee. A tide of ſorrow will ſoon overwhelm thee. But thou haſt the promiſe, and thy God is thine. May he indeed be near to thee."

MATTERS being as they are, ſaid Aſher, I hold it good that we kill a kid or a lamb, take Joſeph's many coloured coat, rend it in divers places, and ſmear it with the blood of the ſlain beaſt, and ſend it to our father, who will naturally conclude, that ſome hungry lion has devoured him, and we his ſons ſhall be freed from all ſuſpicion. We are neceſſitated either to confeſs the fact, or cover it over with diſſimulation. If we do the former, we draw down the curſe of our father upon us, and there is at leaſt a ſtrong probability, that by the latter we ſhall retain his love and confidence; though God knows we little deſerve it."

THE advice given by Aſher, was immediately approved, and Simeon and Levi, were appointed meſſengers to carry the coat unto Jacob, all the reſt being unable to bear the ſorrow of their parent upon this mournful occaſion.—How nearly allied is one ſin to another? The ſons of Jacob have now no covering for their infamy, but lying and diſſimulation. "Welcome my ſons, welcome Simeon and Levi, ſays the tender patriarch, how do all your brethren my children, and how does Joſeph?" "Our brethren, Sir, are all well, but as for Joſeph we have ſeen noth-

ing of him."—"Seen nothing of him! replied he, these five days are gone since I sent him forth to visit his brethren, and enquire after your health. I pray God, that my fears may be groundless. O that no harm may have befallen my boy!" We would hope for the best, Sir, and yet we are not without fear about him ourselves, said they, seeing he is not at home. As we came along through the wilderness, we found a coat that somewhat resembles our brother's, but you will better judge of it when you see it. This, Sir, is the coat we found; see now whether it be thy son's coat or not." "Ah! it is my son's coat indeed. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces," he said, and the blood receding from his countenance, he sunk down into the chair, and could not for a long time be recovered from his fit. The household was alarmed. Benjamin and all his daughters flew to his assistance, and the general cry was—O our father! Our father! Our good father is dying. Dinah flew about the tent, tearing her hair in the utmost distraction, crying, "O my father, my father, would to God I had died in thy stead. What shall thy daughter, thy friendless Dinah do now? A dishonor to her race; now turned out into an inhospitable world, without the protection of a father. Wretched Dinah! Better thou hadst never been born! Cursed be the son of Hamor.—Cursed be he that glories in the

deſtruction of a virgin." One of the female train chaſed his withered limbs, another rubbed his temples with odours, till at laſt life began to return. Fetching a deep ſigh. His eyes widely rolling, he aſked, "Where am I? What has been the matter my daughters? Why have ye diſturbed me? I am now awakened from the ſoundeſt ſleep that I ever fell into. My Dinah, where is ſhe? Tell me my girl what ails thee? I am thy father, Dinah; come near my love, and let me embrace thee. Bid Joſeph to come ſpeedily, I want to ſee him. Ay, now I have hit the ſore. Joſeph is gone, Dinah! Joſeph is rent to pieces. Bring that bloody coat. That coat, Benjamin, is thy brother Joſeph's. He wears it no more. Some of that voracious army wherewithal God hath plagued ſinful man, hath torn him in pieces and devoured him. O my Joſeph! my Joſeph! Had I a thouſand lives, I would have given them all to have redeemed thee from death. But thou art gone my ſon, forever gone from the land of light, and I ſhall ſoon follow thee into that of darkneſs. I come my ſon. I follow thee, I ſoon ſhall join thee in the land afar off. Haſten thy pace thou tardy executioner; cut ſhort thy work thou friendly enemy. I long once more to encircle my ſon in theſe withered arms. Yet my Dinah, poor ruined damſel, if I could, I would live for thy ſake, a little

ing of him."—"Seen nothing of him! replied he, theſe five days are gone ſince I ſent him forth to viſit his brethren, and enquire after your health. I pray God, that my fears may be groundleſs. O that no harm may have befallen my boy!" We would hope for the beſt, Sir, and yet we are not without fear about him ourſelves, ſaid they, ſeeing he is not at home. As we came along through the wilderneſs, we found a coat that ſomewhat reſembles our brother's, but you will better judge of it when you ſee it. This, Sir, is the coat we found; ſee now whether it be thy ſon's coat or not." "Ah! it is my ſon's coat indeed. Without doubt Joſeph is torn to pieces," he ſaid, and the blood receding from his countenance, he ſunk down into the chair, and could not for a long time be recovered from his fit. The houſhold was alarmed. Benjamin and all his daughters flew to his aſſiſtance, and the general cry was—O our father! Our father! Our good father is dying. Dinah flew about the tent, tearing her hair in the utmoſt diſtraction, crying, "O my father, my father, would to God I had died in thy ſtead. What ſhall thy daughter, thy friendleſs Dinah do now? A diſhonor to her race; now turned out into an inhoſpitable world, without the protection of a father. Wretched Dinah! Better thou hadſt never been born! Curſed be the ſon of Hamor.—Curſed be he that glories in the

deſtruction of a virgin." One of the female train chafed his withered limbs, another rubbed his temples with odours, till at laſt life began to return. Fetching a deep ſigh. His eyes widely rolling, he aſked, "Where am I? What has been the matter my daughters? Why have ye diſturbed me? I am now awakened from the ſoundeſt ſleep that I ever fell into. My Dinah, where is ſhe? Tell me my girl what ails thee? I am thy father, Dinah; come near my love, and let me embrace thee. Bid Joſeph to come ſpeedily, I want to ſee him. Ay, now I have hit the ſore. Joſeph is gone, Dinah! Joſeph is rent to pieces. Bring that bloody coat. That coat, Benjamin, is thy brother Joſeph's. He wears it no more. Some of that voracious army wherewithal God hath plagued ſinful man, hath torn him in pieces and devoured him. O my Joſeph! my Joſeph! Had I a thouſand lives, I would have given them all to have redeemed thee from death. But thou art gone my ſon, forever gone from the land of light, and I ſhall ſoon follow thee into that of darkneſs. I come my ſon. I follow thee, I ſoon ſhall join thee in the land afar off. Haſten thy pace thou tardy executioner; cut ſhort thy work thou friendly enemy. I long once more to encircle my ſon in theſe withered arms. Yet my Dinah, poor ruined damſel, if I could, I would live for thy ſake, a little

to alleviate thy ſorrows. But I die my girl; I find I cannot long ſurvive my Joſeph." Lovely Benjamin, Dinah, and their ſiſters endeavour to conſole the mourning patriarch under his heavy loſs. But all in vain. He refuſed to be comforted, ſaying, "Nay, but I will die with my ſon." Shunah the wife of Judah, Tamah the wife of Simeon, and Zillah the wife of Napthali, endeavoured to ſet before him his numerous ſeed. His eleven remaining ſons, their preſent offspring, and the proſpect of a numerous iſſue. But the good man replied, "Theſe are not my Joſeph," and ſunk into another fit of agonizing ſorrow. Thus he grieved from day to day for the loſs of his ſon, nor could all the endeavours of his children comfort him.

JOSEPH and his company drew near to Memphis, the capital of Egypt, where the merchants intended to diſpoſe of their goods. And here Alvah the Iſhmaelite, found a market for his young Hebrew likewiſe. Alvah had ſeen ſo much of Joſeph's dexterity in the management of his affairs, and was ſo delighted with his piety and good ſenſe, that he would gladly have kept him for his own ſervant, had it been his pleaſure to have continued with him; but knowing his diſtreſſed circumſtances, deemed it ungenerous to lay any conſtraint upon his inclination.

THEREFORE the evening after their arrival in Memphis, he calleth Joſeph to him, and

thus addreſſed him. "My young man, I am perfectly ſenſible that for envy you was ſeparated from your father's houſe, and ſold unto me. Since you came under my direction, your agreeable converſe, your courteous and affable conduct, has perfectly gained my affections. If you are content to abide with me, I will uſe you as a friend rather than a ſervant; for you are dear to me Joſeph, as if you was my own ſon. Nevertheleſs as you may have your objections to returning to the land where your barbarous brethren reſide, and as I am uninformed concerning the purpoſes of your God towards you, I leave you to your own voluntary choice, either to return with me, or to abide in Egypt. But if you fix upon Egypt as your reſidence, you muſt be ſold my Joſeph—Sold as a ſlave my friend, notwithſtanding I believe you are born to rule." The ſon of Jacob reſpectfully replied. "My dear Sir, my honoured Alvah, my friend, my father, permit me to call you by that endearing name; I cannot enough admire the goodneſs of God who provides for me in ſtrangers, that friendſhip which was denied me in the houſe of my brethren. All was cruelty from them, but friendſhip my dear maſter has run through the whole of your conduct towards me. Inclination, Sir, would induce me to follow your fortune good or bad, but a ſecret meſſage delivered to me by an heavenly meſſenger not two hours be-

fore I was ſold unto you, obliges me, as your will coincides therewith, to abide a bondman in Egypt.—I would not as yet willingly divulge the contents of the meſſage referred to; but the time will come my honoured maſter, that I ſhall more fully reveal the cauſe of my baniſhment. Then you will clearly ſee that want of reſpect to you is no part of the reaſon why I deſire to leave your very agreeable ſervice. Permit me, Sir, to beg your endeavour to diſpoſe of me as you would wiſh to have your own ſon diſpoſed of in ſimilar circumſtances, and let me owe my good fortune, if ſuch ſhould befal me in a ſtrange land, to a man to whom I am already under ſo many great obligations. Thus, Sir, will you bind me to you for ever, and make me more yours than I poſſibly could be as one of your domeſtic ſervants."

"I WILL Joſeph, replied the good Iſhmaelite, I will take care to diſpoſe of you to your beſt advantage. I will be to you in the place of a father at this time. But when you are advanced my ſon, as God, even the God of your father Abraham will advance you to the higheſt honours, forget not your friend.—Think of poor Alvah, and for my ſake deal favourably with my ſeed, ſhould they ever make ſupplication unto you. I will enhance your price my friend, in ſome low proportion to your worth, but not a penny of it ſhall abide with me, for I have profited greatly by

your preſence already." "My dear Sir, replied Joſeph, you are a merchant, and muſt live upon your gain, why ſhould you throw away any part of it upon a poor unworthy ſtranger?" "I tell you Joſeph returned he with ſome emotion, you are a friend of the Almighty's, and your God will never let poor Alvah be a loſer by any little kindneſs which he may ſhew to you. Be ſatisfied Joſeph. Be content I ſay. And prepare yourſelf by to-morrow noon for the market, and here, let me ſee, take theſe few pieces to provide yourſelf with decent apparel; and I in the mean while, will be taking what meaſures I can for your good." So ſaying he turned and gave no time for reply. Joſeph overwhelmed with gratitude, burſt forth into tears, admiring the wiſdom and goodneſs of God in raiſing up unto him, as it were a ſecond Jacob in the perſon of Alvah. "O thou Holy one, he cried, I am now convinced of thine omnipreſence and ſuperintendency over human affairs. I admire thy wiſdom, I adore thy goodneſs to me, who am unworthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies; go on my God to perfect what thou haſt begun, and ſucceed the earneſt endeavours of benevolent Alvah, in my behalf and ſucceed thou me, and be thou with me, my father and friend, in this land wherein I am a ſtranger, and the glory of all will ultimately redound unto thee. Amen."

THE time arrived that Joſeph muſt appear for ſale, he came arrayed in plain, but decent apparel, which ſhewed the graces of his perſon to the beſt advantage. His maſter and he had but juſt come to the mart, when Potiphar, a renowned officer in the army, and captain general of the forces of Egypt, happened to come paſt, and fixing his eye upon him, conceived a ſingular liking for him. What pity is it, ſaid he within himſelf, to ſee a perſon of ſuch an attractive deportment, diſplaying a countenance ſo diſtinguiſhingly lovely, expoſed to ſale to every ſordid wretch of a maſter? If money will redeem him from ſlavery, it ſhall be done, and I think I ſhall deem myſelf happy in having releaſed one of the moſt amiable of human kind. "What is the price of this young man, my maſter?"

"IF he is ſold, Sir, replied Alvah, an hundred and fifty pieces is his price; but I ſell him not, unleſs I know to whom, and what treatment he is likely to meet with. For it is not neceſſity, but choice that detains him in Egypt." "My name, ſaid he, is Potiphar, I am of ſome conſideration in the ſtate, and near the perſon of his majeſty." "Then Sir, the young man is yours at your own price, and I hope you will conſider him as one that might have expected better fortunes, but for the malice and envy of jealous brethren. I am proud, Sir, to recommend him to you as the moſt virtuous, faithful, and pious of his

race." It is agreed. "Are you willing to follow the fortune of Potiphar?" "I am willing to be his humble ſervant, if Sir, you are he." "Here then merchant, here is your money." "One word Sir, ere the bargain is cloſed, and that is, that as I trade to this place, I muſt beg leave to have a friendly interview occaſionally with my friend Joſeph, for he is my friend, although I have the power of diſpoſing of him at preſent." "Far be it from Potiphar to hinder the youth he loves from acceſs to his friends. You are welcome at all times to viſit your youthful, your amiable friend."

JOSEPH was placed in Potiphar's family, after Alvah had according to promiſe, obliged him to accept of the hundred and fifty pieces, for which he was ſold, and taken a tender farewell of him for a ſeaſon. He had not been long in his new ſtation before he gave ſuch proofs of his probity, as gained him the eſteem of all the family.

POTIPHAR was but lately married to a beautiful lady of the firſt rank, whoſe name was Sabrina; given to the captain by his majeſty himſelf. The better to ſolemnize the nuptials of his warlike officer, the king appointed an hunting match in the deſert of Arabia, where he was graciouſly pleaſed himſelf to attend Potiphar and Sabrina.—They had not long ranged the lonely wild, ere they rouſed a monſtrous lion, maſter of a ſavage

family, at whoſe appearance even the hardeſt of them gave back. The ſurly monſter with furious diſdain flaſhing from his eyes, ſtalked ſlow in ſullen majeſty, and with eyes aſkance ſurveyed his competitors, till perceiving himſelf overmatched by the number of baying hounds, juſt letting looſe upon him, he took to his heels, and ſought refuge in the diſtant thicket. Sabrina, mounted on a ſwift Arabian horſe, well accuſtomed to exerciſes of this kind, ſurpaſſed the hounds, and even outſled the wind; expoſed herſelf to the greateſt danger, to the terror of the noble company, none of whom could come near her, Joſeph alone excepted. Mounted on the fleeteſt of his maſter's courſers, he kept cloſe to his lady, and well for her it was ſo; for coming to the edge of the thicket, which by reaſon of its coolneſs, would not admit the entrance of the lion; who finding himſelf ſo cloſely purſued, turned fiercely upon his enemies. Sabrina being next unto him, had no doubt fallen a prey to his fury, had not Joſeph ruſhed between her and danger. The ſavage roared like the loudeſt thunder and flew in the greateſt ferocity at the lady, who almoſt ſwooned with the fright, whilſt Joſeph ſprung from his horſe, goared the monſter in the neck, and pinned him faſt with his ſpear to the earth. By this time Potiphar himſelf arrived and ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, partly at the danger in which his Sibrana had been, and part-

ly at the heroic fortitude of his new and beloved ſervant, he could not ſpeak a word, till falling firſt on the boſom of his ſpouſe, and then upon Joſeph's neck, he poured forth a flood of joy and gratitude. He inſtantly enfranchiſed the deliverer of his love and placed him at the head of his family, where he acted in all reſpects as one who ſerveth not man ſo much as God. Such circumſpection and fidelity rarely attend the ſtewards of gentlemen of elevated rank. Joſeph was exceeding lovely in his perſon, and the late inſtance of his gallantry and fortitude, made a criminal impreſſion on the mind of his lady, whilſt he unſuſpecting thereof, from a principle of duty and benevolence, performed both to her and to his lord, all the good offices within his power, which although a duty incumbent on him contributed to foſter the latent flame unlawfully kindled in her warped heart.

THE Almighty Jehovah, whoſe all-ſeeing eye, with one comprehenſive glance, examineth all our thoughts, whether virtuous or corrupt; ſeeing the workings of Sabrina's heart, and having deſtined the blooming youth to eſcape the ſnare ſo fatal to his hopes, as well as ruinous to the peace of his undiſturbed mind, commanded Gabriel to deſcend to earth, and give the ſtripling ſome ſtriking imitation of the danger he was in, yet ſtill to conceal the quarter from whence it was to come. Obedient to the high beheſt of the eternal, the

ſeraph preſt with glowing ardour, binds on his golden pinions, ſhoots through the vault of ether, and ſtops not till arrived at the palace of Potiphar, when gloomy night in her ebon car had meaſured half her loneſome journey. He breathed an odoriferous gale upon the bed, and inſtantly the Hebrew exile, felt the warm glow of exalted virtue, aſcending towards the empyreum.—Sweet was the ſlumber when the pious ſoul breathed after joys of an immortal nature. Soon he fancied himſelf, ſtudious of his maſter's affairs, aſſiduouſly promoting the intereſt of his generous patron. Thus employed, he ſaw an hand drawing a net compoſed of golden wire around the place where he ſtood, and inſtantly found himſelf entangled therein. The ſnare appeared ſo formidable, that he ſaw no way of eſcape left for him, nor could he tell to what purpoſe he was thus involved. Conſidering himſelf as a priſoner in this golden ſnare, he heard a voice as it had been from the ærial regions. "O Joſeph! moſt favoured of the children of Jacob, remember thou the God of the Hebrews. Take hold of the ſtrength of Omnipotence, and one vigorous effort, delivers thee from the ſnare." This ſaid, the young patriarch lift up his heart to his God, in this ſhort ejaculation. "O God of my fathers, Abraham, Iſaac and Jacob, for the ſake of him who ſhall bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and deſtroy the ſnare of the devil, aſſiſt

me this once and deliver me." Then collecting all his force, he exerted himſelf in one vigorous ſtruggle, and found the wires break as eaſily, as Sampſon afterwards did the new cords with which he was bound. Juſt as he ſprung into liberty, he awoke and rejoiced that it was but a dream.

Joſeph's God was with him in whatever he did. He gave him ſingular wiſdom and prudence in the management of all his affairs, inſomuch, that whatever he did proſpered in his hands; which led his lord to rely upon his wiſdom and integrity, with a perfect confidence; and unreſervedly commit unto his care, the ſole management of all his ſtate. Unenvied, he enjoyed this flow of calm proſperity, without any mixture of bitterneſs, beſides that which aroſe from his baniſhment from Jacob and Benjamin. Happy had it been for Sabrina, if her heart had been as free from unlawful deſire as was that of her amiable Hebrew. But alas! ſhe fondly encouraged the pleaſing wiſh, till it aroſe to a paſſion too ſtrong for her to ſubdue. Shame induced her long to conceal the guilty flame, yet in ſpite of art and ſtudious care, an inward langour diſcovered itſelf in the penſiveneſs of her countenance. Her unſuſpecting lord, called every poſſible means to her aſſiſtance. The ſons of Eſculapius exhauſted their ſkill; the whole Materia Medica was ranſacked for a cure, every diverſion which pleaſantry could

deviſe, in vain was inſtituted to divert the gloom of her ſolitary mind. She was never happy in any diverſion, unleſs Joſeph made one of the party. Her only ſeaſons of pleaſure were when ſhe could prevail with him to ſit with her, and entertain her with the hiſtory of his native country; which he, unſkilled in the myſteries of love, very readily conſented to.

About this time an accident happened, which ſerved greatly to increaſe the fatal paſſion. Potiphar and Sabrina went on a viſit to Ira, a Lybian Prince, where they plenteouſly enjoyed the rites of hoſpitality for two or three weeks, but unhappily attacked by a band of Arabs as they repaſſed the howling wilderneſs. At the firſt diſcovery of them, Sabrina ſunk as a perſon dying in the arms of her huſband, and her ſoul ſtood as it were on tiptoe, on her pale trembling lip. As a panther ruſheth from the thicket, to ſeize the paſſing prey, Joſeph bounded from the chariot, vaulted on a led horſe, and encouraged the menials to ſtand by their noble patrons. The Arabs charged them with the reſolution and vigor; animated by the intrepidity of our hero, the Egyptians returned the charge, and ſent amongſt them a ſcore of winged deaths, every arrow marked by fate.—Then Joſeph putting ſpurs to his horſe, rode up to the enemy, and with his ſabre divided the head of Mezero, their captain, from his body, and

dealt death to many of the Arabs; the ſervants of Potiphar, following the example of their leader, above half the banditti were preſently diſpatched, whilſt the reſt ſought to hide themſelves from death by flight. Joſeph purſued and killed many more, as they ſtrove to fly from his avenging arm. Sabrina being ſomewhat recovered, Potiphar himſelf flew to the aſſiſtance of his guard, fierce as the lion ravaging for prey; but the work was done, and the enemy diſcomfited ere he could arrive. Sabrina from the chariot beheld the heroic fortitude of the gallant Hebrew, as he raged along the ranks of the enemy, and every wound he inflicted upon them, was as oil poured into the latent flame.

THE grateful ſoul of the young patriarch rejoiced at having it in his power to manifeſt the ſenſe which he had of their goodneſs, by exerting himſelf in their defence, in a ſeaſon of difficulty and danger. With modeſty he received Potiphar's careſſes, who preſented him to his lady as her friend and deliverer. His addreſs to his miſtreſs, was full of duty, gratitude and affection. All which encouraged her to hope that he was ſmote with the ſame guilty paſſion with herſelf, and made her half reſolve at a time convenient, to come to an avowal. Again ſhe reſolved to wait yet farther, to ſee whether his confeſſion would ſave her from that confuſion.

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH.

ARGUMENT.

Syrena comforts her mistress, by promising success to her amour—She strives to entice him—in vain—She persuades her lady to an avowal—His mistress confesseth her love—Solicits his embrace—To divert her attention from it, he relates the story of Eve eating the forbidden fruit—Applies it to his mistress with a view to reanimate her virtue—He relates his sisters ravishment, and its fatal consequences—Her silence and discontent at his coldness—Consults her nurse, who encourageth her to persist—She commandeth Joseph to her chamber—Strives to win him by persuasion—Then to force him—He flies from her, and leaves his scarf behind—Her love turns to rage and hatred—She accuseth him of an attempt upon her honor—He is imprisoned.

BOOK III.

SYRENA, a perſon well ſkilled in all the wily mazes of woman kind, was governeſs to Sabrina, in her virgin years, and now attended her in the capacity of waiting woman. She alone was inſtructed with the fatal ſecret; her miſtreſs having had full proof of her readineſs to concur in any meaſures to gratify her inclination. She conſoled her diſtreſs and flattered her paſſion, by aſſuring her, that as far as ſhe could dive into the ſecrets of a youthful heart, Joſeph was glowing with a paſſion, at leaſt equal to her own. She could read it well in his looks and in his ſighs: for amidſt all his proſperity Joſeph could not help ſighing after his guilty brethren, and his diſtreſſed honourable father, from whoſe embraces he was baniſhed without a cauſe. She promiſed to uſe all her wiſdom to ſerve her miſtreſs, and did not doubt by her prudent management to bring the blooming Hebrew to her fond embraces. As he was one day in his office ſettling his maſters accounts, Syrena entered, and having ſhut the door, ſhe thus

accoſted him. "Maſter Joſeph, be idle who will, we are always ſure to find you in your buſineſs. Indeed maſter Joſeph our lord is happy in having ſuch a ſervant as yourſelf. I do not wonder that both he and my lady have ſuch an high eſteem for you." "I tell you Mrs. Syrena, replied Joſeph, I do nothing but what is my duty. My honourable maſter and lady have a right to my beſt ſervices, and I ſhould be ſhamefully wanting in my duty to God, to them, and myſelf, if I did not ſtudy to my utmoſt to promote their honour, advantage and delight." "I am glad, Sir, replied Syrena, that your virtuous ſentiments concur ſo exactly with my own. And I can tell you, Mr. Joſeph, that more tenderneſs is due from you to your amiable miſtreſs, than perhaps you are aware of." "I know, ſaid he, that my lady is amiable and virtuous, and merits my humbleſt regard, which I ſhall ever be ready to render her with the utmoſt pleaſure." "She is virtuous, ſaid Syrena, and yet I can tell you Joſeph, ſhe cannot help being ſenſible of your attractions, and entertaining the fondneſs of affection for you. I wrung the painful ſecret with the greateſt difficulty from her lips. And you my friend may avail yourſelf of your happineſs, and embrace a favour which ſhe would deny to any but yourſelf, was he even the firſt prince of the blood." Rejoined the patriarch, "my maſter and miſtreſs are daily loading me with favours, of

which I am altogether unworthy. I believe their readineſs to add more as occaſion may offer. But the lips that would inſinuate ſo much as an hint contrary to my miſtreſs's honour, ought to be ſealed in everlaſting ſilence." "Not ſo faſt, Sir, returned ſhe, I tell you ſhe loves you, and longs for your embrace. But I enjoin you to conceal the fatal truth, and improve it to your own advantage." She ended here, and returned to her lady, who waited impatiently the iſſue of this converſation.

SYRENA failed not to enlarge upon her own ſagacity and addreſs, ſhe related the converſe ſhe had had with Joſeph, in the manner which would beſt flatter her lady's paſſion :— and from the whole ſhe inferred that it was caution in the Hebrew, which cauſed him to feign ignorance. But ſhe was ſure that amidſt all his care to conceal it, ſhe could diſcern flaſhes of paſſion dart from his amorous eye, when the name of Sabrina was mentioned.— In ſhort, madam, continued ſhe, the matter muſt be between you and him, for I perceive he is ſo cautious, that he will admit none into the ſecret beſide yourſelves. And indeed I cannot blame him when I conſider how falſe and deceitful the greater part of people are. You know madam, he is young, and a ſtranger to intercourſe with our ſex; and who knows how far modeſty may keep him back from an avowal; beſides he may fear your

ladyſhip's reſentment in caſe your paſſion ſhould not be anſwerable to his."

"O SYRENA! replied the wife of Potiphar, thou knoweſt that in our ſex an avowal is hard, even when the object is lawful; but how much more ſo muſt it be when the object is criminal, and an avowal is the diſplay of our guilt and ſhame. Yet I would even venture to confeſs my love to him, could I but hope the haughty youth would embrace my propoſal. But, O Syrena, ſhould he refuſe it, then ſhould I be undone. His perſon is amiable and lovely, his conduct affable and polite, his ſpirit open and benevolent; but his virtue, Syrena! I fear his virtue is inflexible." "O madam, replied the ſwarthy Duenna, no virtue can be proof againſt ſuch charms as yours. The Hebrew will fall an eaſy victim, when he is aſſured of your affection."

ENCOURAGED by the aſſurances of Syrena, ſhe reſolves to abandon ſhame and modeſty at once, and ſolicit Joſeph to her embrace. To this purpoſe ſhe propoſes an airing, and requires him to attend her in Potiphar's abſence, in her chariot. As they were on the way with a ſcarlet bluſh upon the countenance and deſire ſparkling in her eyes, with a faultring voice that beſpoke the blackneſs of her guilt, ſhe ſaid, "Joſeph you cannot be ignorant of my deſire for your company, and yet I can tell you, that if your boſom is proof againſt love, love even to me, I may rue the

day that ever I beheld your too amiable face. For I love you Joſeph; my pain forces me to confeſs my ſhame, I have truſted my honour in your hand, I hope you will act with your uſual gallantry." She ſaid, then leaning her head on his ſnowy boſom, melted into a flood of tears, which ſhe endeavoured but in vain to conceal. Aſtoniſhed at this open declaration, it was ſometime before he was capable of ſpeech or reflection.

AFTER a long ſilence, accompanied with tears upon her part, and heartfelt ſighs upon his, not without ſtruggles between corruption and virtue, in broken accents he replied: "Your honour, my lady, is ever ſafe with your unworthy ſervant, whoſe greateſt glory is to be faithful to the truſt repoſed in him. But before I explain myſelf upon this matter, will your ladyſhip give me leave to relate an affair which is better known among the children of Shem, than among the deſcendants of Ham. After leave obtained, with hope of extricating himſelf from his preſent difficulty, and working ſome ſuitable impreſſion upon the mind of his miſtreſs, he thus begun.

"WHEN our firſt parents Adam and Eve originally dropped from the all-forming hand, they were perfectly free from any bias to evil —not one corrupt inclination poſſeſſed their peaceful breaſts. This calm ſerenity, this ſweet compoſure, continued with them as long as they retained their innocence. But to their

ſad experience they ere long found that the effect of guilt is dire alarm and inceſſant perturbation. Our benevolent creator was pleaſed to put the parents of mankind in poſſeſſion of the paradiſaical garden, where a perpetual ſpring cheered the bleſſed mound, and every ſalubrious vegetable. All that thine eyes behold, all that the earth produceth, Adam, is thine, ſaith the munificent deity. I give thee leave to uſe thy utmoſt freedom with all the produce of the earth. One tree, and only one I forbid thee to touch. Its fertile boughs indeed bend low beneath its fruit, which pendant hang attractive of the eye. This Adam, is the forbidden tree. Theſe are the fruit, to taſte of which, is death. Beware of it man, come not near it Adam, for on the day thou eateſt of it, thou ſhalt ſurely die. Incautious Eve, the mother of humanity, in an evil hour was prevailed upon by the arch apoſtate, to eat the prohibited morſel, and awful was the conſequence. Having eat thereof herſelf, ſhe become her huſband's firſt ſeducer, and drew him contrary to the light of his own conſcience, to partake of her guilt. This done, the horrors of Gehenna tortured their guilty conſciences, and they knew not where to fly, to ſhun the threatened death. The evening arrived, the ſky had loſt its ſerenity, the beaſts their wonted tameneſs, the flowers looſe the greateſt part of their fragrance, and all nature ſeemed to wear a melancholy af-

pect. On the evening juſt as radiant Phœbus concealed himſelf in the weſtern ocean, the divine creator himſelf comes down into the garden, to call the delinquents to account for their conduct. Awful was the change. They cannot ſtand with filial reſpect and confidence in the ſacred preſence; much leſs did they long for the approach of the celeſtial viſitant as heretofore; but baſely fly from the ſight of their maker, to hide themſelves from his reſearches; whoſe amiable preſence erewhile, they counted the moſt exalted bleſſing. Nor did the eternal himſelf appear at this time with that friendly and familiar air as before, but with reſentment glowing on his awful countenance. The thicket unable to conceal the parents of mankind, from the piercing eye of omnipreſence, he arraigns them at his equitable bar, hears their poor defence, and denounceth upon them the fatal ſentence. Since then none may hope to touch forbidden fruit with impunity. You my lady are like the interdicted tree. Your amiable perſonal excellencies, diſplay themſelves in the moſt alluring manner. But they are forbid the enjoyment of all men, my lord alone excepted. He alone may approach you with familiarity. He alone may lawfully enjoy.—Was I, madam, to dare injuriouſly to betray my maſter, and to diſhonor his amiable conſort, I ſhould act as a villain, and ungrateful traitor to the beſt of maſters, and as a rebel

againſt the God of my anceſtors, whoſe tremendous wrath I ſhould thereby awake; and you yourſelf, madam, upon cool reflection would curſe me for perpetrating the execrable deed. I love you miſtreſs, and would protect, not diſhonor you; I love my honourable lord, and would not betray him. I love my God, and would not offend him. Permit me then, madam, to intreat you to ſtifle a paſſion ſo deſtructive to your honour and tranquility; which if indulged, will yield the moſt bitter reflections and expoſe to the greateſt dangers."

"Ah Joſeph, replied the wife of Potiphar, what a well invented ſtory your icy heart has contrived, in order to evade the honours proffered you? What needleſs ſcruples does that whim of religon and virtue inſpire you with? What injury would thereby be done to your maſter, Joſeph? I am ſtill his: Always ready to oblige him, and ſhould never behave to him with the greater diſtance. We have nothing to fear, ſo long as we are prudent enough to conceal our intercourſes from the curious eye. I tell you again, I love you Joſeph.

"Madam, returned the Hebrew, even in my father's family in the caſe of my only ſiſter, I have a loud monitor, that bids me beware of the ſin of uncleanneſs." "I pray now let us have it, ſaid ſhe, I ſuppoſe it is ſome

whimſical religious ſtory, tending to the ſame purpoſe."

"It is a truth, Madam, the remembrance of which, will give occaſional ſorrow to me to my dying day. My ſiſter, young, amiable, and curious, longing to ſee more of the world than her father's houſe admitted of, went forth into a neighbouring principality, at a time, when a magnificent feſtival, in honour of their patron deity, was ſolemnized. Amongſt the multitude who attended, were Shechem the young prince of the Hivites, and Tamar his ſiſter. Dinah, young and vain, was attended with a gaudy train ſelected out of my father's menials, and ſhe herſelf in an elegant apparel. Prince Shechem caſt a languiſhing look upon my ſiſter, conceived a violent paſſion for her, and reſolved at all events to poſſeſs her. His ſiſter Tamar, was young and beautiful, but unadorned with that amiable virtue which is the greateſt glory of her ſex. She contracted an intimacy with my ſiſter Dinah, who unſkilled in amorous intrigues, accepted of an invitation to viſit the princeſs Tamar, in the city of Shechem. The day was ſpent in innocent pleaſantry, only every now and then there was ſomething that bordered upon the profane. As the ſolar orb deſcended the weſtern hemiſphere, Dinah propoſed her return to her father, but was put off from time to time, by the prince and princeſs, till ſhe was

at laſt convinced of her unhappineſs, and too late repented the curioſity that led her forth to ſee the daughters of the land. She was not to be won by prayers and intreaties, therefore was forced to a compliance with his lewd deſires, and for a time continued a priſoner to the prince's affection, within his palace. Still he loved her with encreaſing fervour, and his very ſoul clave to the unhappy damſel. So courteous, affable, and loving was his conduct to her, after he had defiled her, that ſhe half forgave the injury, and conceived ſomething like affection for him. His love grew ſtronger every day, and finding that he could not live without her company on the one hand, nor his affection permit him to uſe her like an harlot on the other, he implored the good offices of King Hamor his father, to procure her for him in lawful marriage. From motives of policy, the old king readily complied, propoſed to his courtiers the deſire of his ſon, and then made ſuit unto Iſrael for his conſent. My father called a council deſcended from his loins, to deliberate on the propoſal of Hamor; and the iſſue was, that unleſs the ſubjects of that prince, would conform to the laws of the Hebrews, they would not conſent, but would reſcue their ſiſter by force of arms, or periſh in the attempt. This communicated to Hamor and Shechem, they made no difficulty of complying with the condition. A public feſtival was appointed to be obſerved by all ranks

of the people to solemnize the marriage of Shechem and Dinah: on the first day of which, every male was circumcised in compliance with the Hebrews, and the carnival greatly inflaming the blood, and enervating their minds, they fell an easy prey to the premeditated revenge of my brethren.—Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, selected a choice band out of Israel's domestic retinue, and clad in arms, before the dawn of the third morning of the festival, came intrepidly upon the city, and filled it with fearful carnage. King Hamor and his son hearing the cry of murder from all quarters, alarmed the houshold troops, but ere they could make resistance, met with death in the gates of the palace royal. The city they reduced to ashes, and slew every man within it. This horrid slaughter and conflagration all arose from the unlawfulness of Shechem's love. Had he observed the rules of virtue, and proposed honourable terms to the Patriarch, he would no doubt have accepted of the alliance. But uncleanness is not to be tolerated in the house of Israel. Now, my honorable lady, consider the difference between lord Potiphar, first of Pharoah's martial train, and these simple Hebrew swains. If they could pour out desolation upon the metropolis of a kingdom, in revenge of their sister's dishonor, what might not my lord do, was any villain to dare audaciously to defile his honorable bed, and vio-

late the chaſtity of his betrothed lady? Far be it from Joſeph, Madam, to entertain a thought ſo treacherous to either you or my lord."

She replied not, but diſappointed in her love, continued the reſt of the time full of ſilent diſcontent, her troubled mind agitated with different paſſions, gave place alternately to love, fear, and hateful revenge; but the more that Joſeph ſaw the agitations of her mind, the more ſteadily was his own heart fortified by virtue. Arrived at the palace, ſhe retired to her chamber to conſult with her nurſe Syrena, what further ſhould be done; and afflicted Joſeph went to his apartment to implore the protection of Jacob's God.

Syrena gave it as her opinion, that fear or modeſty muſt needs be the cauſe of Joſeph's refuſal of an offer that did ſo much honour to a favourite menial; alledging, that her miſtreſſes graces, were ſufficient to thaw the frigidity of even old age itſelf: and adviſed that a further trial ſhould be made ere ſhe gave up her hopes. Pharaoh's birth day was now at hand, and the general muſt repair to court, to compliment his majeſty, and aſſiſt upon the grand occaſion, but Sabrina was taken extremely ill in the morning, with a palpitation of heart, and great depreſſion of ſpirits, and therefore could not attend him to the court. Her lord no ſooner gone with his retinue, than ſhe ſends Syrena to command Joſeph to attend

her pleaſure in her chamber. Slow of pace, and with a reluctant heart, he came and ſtood at a formal diſtance from her, while in thoughtful ſilence ſhe ſat, her eyes intently fixed on his bluſhing face. "And are you at laſt come, ſaid ſhe, ungrateful youth, to ſcorn and ſlight your over fond miſtreſs. Come nearer, Sir, and let me ſpeak with freedom to you, for you and I muſt be better acquainted before we part. It would have been better for you, and more becoming your character and ſtation, to have complied at once, with my former requeſt, if it had only been out of reſpect to the dignity of my ſtation, and the violent exceſs of my paſſion; and not have ſuffered me to undergo the ſhame of repeating my ſolicitations, and condeſcending to expreſs myſelf in terms too ſtrong for female modeſty to utter without a bluſh. But I am willing to put the moſt favorable conſtruction upon your conduct, and will not only make all poſſible allowance for it, but endeavor to remove out of the way, every thing that would protract our pleaſure. Perhaps, Joſeph, you might entertain ſome ſuſpicion, whether I was really in earneſt at our laſt interview, or if I did not make that humble proſtration of myſelf to you, on purpoſe to try your virtue. But aſſure yourſelf that I was in earneſt, as my repeating the ſame requeſt, might abundantly ſerve to demonſtrate. But I'll tell you more

Joſeph, and what would undo me, was it known to any but ourſelves. This day I feigned myſelf ſick, on purpoſe to be at home with you. The jolity of courtly parade, is nothing to your ſweet company. Now you may if you will, ſee, that I can part with the company of nobles, and princes, for the love I bear to your amiable perſon, my Joſeph.—And ſhall I languiſh and pine without any hope of comfort, when it is in your power my dear friend to relieve me? do not talk any more to me of thoſe holy ties of religion, thoſe ſevere rules of virtue. Virtue is a mere imaginary thing, that can bring no pleaſure, but only diſtract the heart with terror. And what is religion, but a dream, as the lives of all our prieſts teſtify; for however they cry out againſt the ſins of the times, when in the pulpit, there are none that reliſh gay delights better than they in private? Could thy God, my Joſeph, delight in making thee behave cruelly to one that loves thee, he were to be deteſted inſtead of adored; beware, Joſeph, and not father thy indifference to me upon the gods; rather own that ſome happy unſtained nymph has captivated your affections, and that for her ſake you cannot, you dare not oblige your miſtreſs. But cannot you be her's and mine too? But oh! your honor is concerned. I pray where is my honor in thus humbly ſuing to you my friend? but what is honour? merely fantaſtic and precarious.

Honour is certainly to eaſe the pains of thoſe that love us."

"Oh madam! returned he, with a ſigh ſufficient to rend his loins, what avails a momentary pleaſure that ſoon muſt be devoured by keen remorſe? Once done it cannot be recalled, let the repentance be ever ſo poignant. Concealed by theſe curtains, will not ſecure us from the fears of diſcovery and diſgrace. I might indeed join with you to diſhonour my lord, and for a moment we might riot in the pleaſures of ſenſe. But, alas! what would this be in compariſon of the ſolid pleaſures of a good conſcience? Equal if not ſuperior delights are lawful to you in your marriage relation with him, to whom you gave yourſelf. And where can a man be found more amiable and more deſirable for a boſom companion, than my lord? Think my lady how far what you propoſe would debaſe you below your rank, to come to a level with your poor ſervant, whom you may at all times command in every thing lawful. No, Madam, I cannot conſent to a deed ſo baſe, as wilfully to injure the benevolent Potiphar, diſhonor the God of my fathers, and bring an indelible ſtain on the family of Iſrael. Far from being like idols of ſtocks and ſtones, my God ſees our moſt ſecret actions; he hears our ſofteſt whiſpers, and tries the deepeſt receſſes of thought. Urge me not, Madam, for I cannot commit this great wickedneſs in the ſight

of my God." He ended here, and ſhe full of reſentment replied.

"It might have been ſufficient, modeſtly to have refuſed the offer which the exceſs of my paſſion urged me to make, without upbraiding me with my ſhame. This argues impudence, joined with an unrelenting heart; but I leave it for you to chooſe whether you will kindly embrace your own happineſs, and render happy her that loves you to diſtraction; or to ſtand the ſhock of my revenge, for revenged I will be; the charms for which princes have ſighed in vain, are not to be ſlighted with impunity. No, Sir, never think of it. I ſhall certainly accuſe you to your maſter of having attempted my diſhonour, and a dry oſtentation of virtue, the moſt ſolemn proteſtation of innocence, will not then deliver you from the pangs of puniſhment.

O Joſeph! never was virtue aſſaulted like thine. Never did youth more gloriouſly triumph over temptation.—Neither prayers, tears, nor threatenings upon her part, compaſſion nor terror upon thine, could alter the purpoſes of thy determined virtue, and make thee yield to the importunity of a diſhoneſt appetite. Amiable youth, how ſwelled thy noble heart with generous pity for thy betrayed maſter; and with grief for thy fallen miſtreſs? Even the danger that on all hands ſurrounded thee, could not ſtem the chryſtal tide, that ran down thy manly cheeks—while

Sabrina ſat with her eyes fixed upon thee, eyes ſparkling both with love and revenge.

Miſtaken woman, ſhe interprets Joſeph's tears in her own favour, and bent on completing her own ſhame, ſhe lays hold on him, and threw herſelf on the bed, ſaying, "Come Joſeph, let us enjoy the preſent moment, whilſt kindneſs gently flows through your yielding heart."

"No, Madam, replied the ſteady youth, dungeons and gibbets, are no objects of my fear. Criminal converſe with a forbidden object; injuring my maſter, and offending my God, are what I juſtly fear, and I am in danger of them all, whilſt I am in your company. But I abhor the deed, and fly from the place of temptation. So ſaying, he turned haſtily about, freed himſelf from her embrace, and ruſhed from the room. Her luſt grown to a fury unbridled, ſhe ſtrove to pull him upon the bed, when diſentangling the diamond, which buttoned his purple ſcarf, he left it in her poſſeſſion and ſo eſcaped the ſnare.

The noble youth departed, obſtinate in virtue, ſhe was miſerably diſtracted between the ſting of her diſappointed love, and the fear of being diſcovered, but ſoon ſhe reſolved the ruin of him who had goodneſs enough, not to ruin her even at her own requeſt. She cried aloud as if in eminent danger, and nurſe Syrena, who gueſſed at the cauſe, flew to her aſſiſtance. She found her ſitting upon a bed,

Joſeph's ſcarf lying by her, and deeply bathed in tears. "O what ſhall I do Syrena? cried ſhe, the ſcornful Hebrew deſpiſeth my paſſion, and fled but juſt now from me, with as much horror, as if I had been a cockatrice. Go nurſe, alarm the houſe, and have him ſeized; for I will ſwear an attempt of raviſhment againſt him. Befriend me now but this once, my dear Syrena, and I am your friend forever." The houſhold alarmed, Joſeph is ſeized and kept in confinement till Potiphar's return, which was in the evening; he went directly to his ſpouſe's chamber, to enquire after her health, where he found her in the utmoſt diſorder and confuſion, with the rage of her diſappointed luſt. Struck with aſtoniſhment, he kindly enquired the cauſe of her diſorder.

"Alas! my lord, ſaid this daughter of deceit, we have nouriſhed up a viper to ſting us, a wretch that will undo us, if permitted under the roof. The inſolent Hebrew, forgetting his wretchedneſs when you was pleaſed to take him under your protection; and the friendly entertainment we have given him ſince he lived with us. Not content with being the ſole diſpoſer of all your poſſeſſions, aſpireth even to your bed. I was laid down to take a little ſlumber at noon, when the fellow came audaciouſly into my chamber, and explained his beaſtly deſign. I chid his impudent lewdneſs, and charged him to be gone

that inſtant, or I would inform you of his conduct; but inſtead of departing the villain laid hold on me, and by force would have obtained his filthy purpoſe, had I not alarmed the houſe with my cries. When he found me inflexible, and heard the cries of my diſtreſs, he haſted away in ſuch diſorder that he left his ſcarf behind him; a ſure teſtimony of his villainy. My lord, you have profeſſed to love me. If you do, you will revenge the inſult offered to my honour, by inflicting the moſt examplary puniſhment upon this inſolent wretch. I ſhall never be able to endure the ſight of him again about the houſe."

Highly delighted with the virtue and probity of his lady, and aſtoniſhed at the effrontery of the Hebrew, he commanded Joſeph to be brought pinioned into his preſence, and with a countenance, ſtern as the face of war, thus accoſted him. "Wretch! What pity is it that thy outſide, and undaunted air ſhould bely ſuch a baſe and diabolical heart. I blame myſelf, wretch that I ever ſheltered thee under my roof, and placed ſuch a villain at the head of my affairs. But thy vile hypocriſy would deceive thoſe that are even but a few degrees better than thyſelf: well then might thy faintly ſhew, gain upon my artleſs heart, a ſtranger to treachery and black deſign. Wouldſt thou, viper, bite the hand that feeds thee, and poiſon the boſom that nouriſhed thee? Was it not enough that I

had put my all into thy untruſty hands, but thou muſt aſpire even to my bed? A gloomy dungeon ſhall ſuperſede the purple bed to which thou aſpireſt; and rattling chains ſhall ſerve inſtead of the ſoft careſſes of unlawful love. Away with the ſlave to his deſtined dwelling, till I have time to meditate ſome unheardof puniſhment for his baſeneſs." The ſame virtue that preſerved the pious Hebrew, in the time of temptation, from the guilty deed, preſerved him now from fearing the threats of his maſter, wherefore with a ſteady and undaunted air, he replied,

"Dungeons and chains, my lord, I can defy, nor can even the approach of death at all diſturb the peace of my heart. But your diſpleaſure, my lord, I cannot ſuſtain. The hatred of my kind and generous maſter; once my avowed friend, is worſe than a thouſand deaths. But remember it Potiphar, Joſeph is clear from the guilt charged againſt him, and his own conſcience cannot accuſe him of ſo much as a diſhoneſt thought of this kind. I believe in God. The God of my father in due time, will bring me forth to the light, and I ſhall behold his righteouſneſs in clearing up my innocence, and expoſing to infamy the baſeneſs of my accuſers, of what rank ſoever they be." He ſaid, and inſtantly was conducted to jail, with a ſtrict charge to the keeper, to lade him with the heavieſt irons, and to ſhut him up in the cloſeſt ward.

THE

LIFE

OF

JOSEPH.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ARGUMENT.

GABRIEL *aſcends to heaven to receive freſh inſtructions—Rachel and Thirza the wife of Shem, deſcend and comfort him unperceived—Potiphar called in a hurry to fight the Ethiopians, forgets Joſeph—Their diſcourſe—Chorion the jailor, has a dream that impreſſeth his mind with tenderneſs—The night following, ſees an heavenly apparition go to Joſeph's apartment—Gabriel appears to Joſeph, inſtructs and comforts him—The jailor's reverence for Joſeph—He gets acquainted with the king's butler and baker—Their dreams—The butler's intereſting hiſtory—The good interpretation of his dream—The fatal interpretation of the baker's dream—His former villainy and murder—An apparition of his murdered brother—The butler's reſtoration to his office—Joſeph falls in love with an unknown princeſs—The baker's execution—Sabrina's paſſion for Joſeph rekindles.*

BOOK IV.

GABRIEL appointed guardian to the baniſhed Joſeph, induſtriouſly ſtrove to ſortify his youthful mind againſt the attacks of wickedneſs. Seeing now the iſſue, aſcended ſwifter by far, than the forked lightnings to the regions of eternal day, to receive inſtructions from the univerſal governor, what to do in favour of his beloved charge. Mean while, Rachel, Joſeph's mother, and Thirza the wife of Shem, riding on a golden cloud, were taking a tour through this part of the univerſe; and ſeeing the lovely youth conducted to priſon, they deſcended low, and breathed ambroſial fragrance into the dungeon, a little to mitigate his ſorrow. "O Thirza, ſaid Jacob's departed ſpouſe, how deep and intricate are the ways of the Almighty to us, whilſt in a ſtate of dark mortality? Who could from his preſent circumſtances think, that in the divine purpoſe, my Joſeph ſhould be placed at the head of his brethren from whom he is ſeparated? Who could ſuppoſe that the lovely priſoner is to be the future protector of the choſen ſeed? The ar-

chers have indeed galled thee ſore my ſon, but thy bow has ſtill abode in its ſtrength; by the mighty God of thy father Jacob, ſhall the arms of thy hands be made ſtrong, and theſe thine enemies, ſhall yet bow down unto thee. O Jacob! thou dear, thou honourable man. What pangs would wring thy ſorrowful heart, didſt thou but know the agonies of thy beloved? But thou art ſoothed under the kind deception, believing his pain long ſince to have been finiſhed. His ſuppoſed death gave thee leſs ſorrow by far, than his preſent life would bring upon thee. Faith and patience, poſſeſs ye the heart of my darling, till he aſcend triumphant over his enemies."

"O my Rachel! my deareſt daughter, returned the wife of Shem, we have ever ſeen, that whom the holy and allwiſe God deſigns for eminent uſefulneſs, he trains them up in the rough ſchool of adverſity. The afflictions my lovely deſcendant endures, will endue him with ſympathy for the diſtreſſed; even when aſcended to the government of the kingdom, thy chains Joſeph, will make thy grandeur to ſit more graceful upon thee.—The falſe accuſations laid againſt thee, will teach thee the neceſſity of caution and impartiality in the adminiſtration of juſtice. Perſevere in virtue my ſon. Take kindly the rough means by which thy heavenly father inſtructeth. The end ſhall crown thy work, and fill thy heart with gratitude, and thy mouth

with praiſe." Thus the two mothers converſed together, after the manner of diſembodied ſpirits, and gently moved forward upon their cloudy chariot, leaving the perfumes of life behind them.

CHORION the jailor, had juſt ſecured his new priſoner in irons, made faſt the priſon, and retired to reſt, when he fell into a deep ſleep, from which he was awaked by the following dream. He ſuppoſed himſelf in a widely extended field, ruminating on the beauties which every where decorated the teeming earth. Walking ſlowly along, a yearling lamb, cloſely purſued by a couple of wolves, run up to him, and fell down at his feet, as if ſupplicating protection. Untimidated, the ſhe wolf came ruſhing forward, and with bloody fangs, was for devouring the innocent even before his face, whilſt he drew his ſabre to defend the fugitive. In the midſt of the ſcuffle betwixt him and the ravenous monſter, he awoke with an impreſſion upon his mind, that ſome priſoner under his care was perſonated by the lamb, perſecuted by enemies, who eagerly thirſted for his blood, and hoped to find that ſafety and friendſhip in the cells of a priſon, which were denied him where he had a right to expect it. Chorion was none of the ſavage herd, who have in later times kept watch at the doors of priſon-houſes. He had a humane heart, capable of feeling the diſtreſ-

ſes of his fellow creatures. The neceſſary ſtrictneſs and ſeverity of his office, was always performed with a reluctant hand, and with inward ſenſations, becoming a deſcendant of Adam.

THE dream was ſuggeſted at Gabriel's requeſt, by one of the benevolent ethereal ſpirits, with a view to render Chorion as gentle as might be to Joſeph, during the abſence of his guardian angel, who upon his account, was aſcended to the empyrean. It had its deſired effect, for the cautious jailor, for fear that he ſhould add to the ſufferings of the innocent, was extremely gentle and tender to all his priſoners.

THE following night having ſpread the thickeſt darkneſs over all the land, neither moon nor ſtar embelliſhed the concave ſky. As Chorion ſtood upon his tower, he ſaw at a diſtance, darting through the air, a form divinely beautiful and fair, ſurrounded with glory, almoſt too ſtrong for his viſual orbs to ſuſtain, and followed by a train of ſtupendous ſplendour, which evidently beſpoke the viſitant, to be of celeſtial lineage. As he drew near, and went paſt the keeper to the priſon, he had as good a view of him, as his confuſion would ſuffer him to take. For Joſeph's ſake, the friendly angel thought proper to favour Chorion with a glimpſe of ethereal brilliance, and but a glimpſe, leſt he ſhould by a too rich diſplay of celeſtial excellence, overturn the rea-

ſoning powers of his mind. Some heavenly deity, cried Chorion in a rapture, ſome God who defends virtue and innocence, propitious to the cries of diſtreſs, condeſcends to viſit the loathſome cells of a miſerable priſon. See, he is gone directly to the ſtranger's apartments. The youth is innocent of whatever he is accuſed of; the holy Gods will not condeſcend to viſit the guilty. This is the lamb that fled to me for protection. O lovely youth, as far as poor Chorion's influence can go, you ſhall meet with nothing but friendſhip within theſe walls. I will eaſe you of your chains, and provide ſuitable apartments for your reception.

MEANWHILE Gabriel ſtood confeſt in Joſeph's cell, and even groaned to ſee the ſon of Iſrael incumbered with horrid chains. Secretly he gave him a celeſtial draught juſt drawn from the fountain of life, which enabled him with pleaſure to bear the heavenly radiance with which he was arrayed. "Fear not Joſeph, ſaid the ſplendid meſſenger, I am Gabriel of whom thou haſt often heard. Gabriel who ſtands in the preſence of the Lord. This is the firſt time indeed of my appearance to thee, but thou haſt long been my careful charge. It was I that ſent Abel thy kinſman to comfort thee when thou waſt in the pit. I ſtood by with unſpeakable pleaſure and beheld the noble reſiſtance you made to the temptations of your miſtreſs: and

rejoiced to ſee you come off a conqueror from danger ſo fatal. Your preſent afflictions my Joſeph are not the fruit of guilt on your part. They are ſuch as you ſhall be delivered from. But, O, what keen remorſe would have torn your heart had you been left Joſeph to ſin ſo loudly againſt your God! From ſome inkling which the infernal ſpirits had got of the deſigns of your God towards you, they have leagued together to deſtroy you; and two of the moſt active of the damned race, as agents for the rebellious community, undertook to accompliſh your ruin. Belphegor and Adramelech, they ſtirred up your brethren againſt you, and had not I interpoſed, your blood would have been ſacrificed to their malice. Little did they know that the very means which they took to fruſtrate the deſigns of grace were appointed directly to promote them, and that whilſt they were gratifying their own infernal malice, they were doing what ſhould be over-ruled to your advantage. They inflamed your miſtreſs with a burning deſire to enjoy your embraces, and turned her love into hatred and rage upon being diſappointed. And it was them who inſpired Potiphar with the raſh deſign of deſtroying you. Thus far they have been divinely permitted to perſecute you Joſeph. But here ends the bounds of their permiſſion. Truſt in the God of thy fathers. Let patience have its perfect work; for when thou art tried,

thou ſhall come forth as purified gold.—Grieve not for your father, for you ſhall yet ſee him in a ſtrange land; and theſe hands of yours ſhall cloſe his aged eyes, after you have received the paternal benediction from his prophetic lips. Potiphar will ſoon have his attention attracted by other objects, ſo that he ſhall not touch your life; you will yet ſee him and embrace him as your friend, for Sabrina ſhall one day be made to confeſs her guilt. I leave you Joſeph, but remember you the God of your fathers, and ſerve him with a perfect heart. I have prejudiced the keeper much in your favour. The peace of the everlaſting covenant be with you." So ſaying he ſhrouded himſelf in darkneſs and the young patriarch ſaw him no more. But O! what pleaſure did the ſeraph's melodious voice cauſe to thrill through the heart of the priſoner. Even in a priſon he was wrapt up into the ſuburbs of heaven. As ſoon as the morning began to dawn, Chorion the keeper from whoſe eyes ſleep had been baniſhed all the night, viſited every apartment in priſon, and when he came to Joſeph's cell he ſtood motionleſs with awful reverence of his priſoner; and as ſoon as he could ſpeak, with a faultring voice he ſaid, "I am ſorry, ſir, that you have been ſo ill uſed. I wiſh I had known your deſert before, then theſe ſervile chains ſhould not have diſgraced your limbs." So ſaying he

took off his irons, let him up to his own apartments, and treated him with the utmoſt reſpect.

THAT very day a courier from the frontiers of the kingdom arrived at the war-office with advice that the Ethiopians, then a warlike people, had invaded thoſe parts of the empire moſt contiguous to them; wherefore Potiphar was diſpatched at the head of the army to put a ſtop to their ravages; an expedient that took off his attention from Joſeph, and kept him long at a diſtance from Memphis. During which time, our injured hero, continued a priſoner, neglected and forgot. But the ſame divine and ever watchful providence which proſpered him in the houſe of Potiphar, followed him ſtill in the houſe of his priſon, and ſucceeded all the works of his hands.

AMONGST the many priſoners that were confined for different crimes were Florillo the king's principal cup bearer, and Labonah the chief baker. Having received charge of all the priſoners from Chorion the keeper, Joſeph frequently viſited them, and ſoon contracted an intimacy with them. Making his morning viſit to Florillo and Labonah, and one day after he had been near a year in priſon, he found a penſive ſadneſs louring upon their heavy countenances. "What is the matter with you my friends ſaid he? It appears by your countenances that your hearts are ſorrowful. May I beg to know the cauſe? If

any thing within my power can be of ſervice to you, my aſſiſtance may be depended upon." "Alas, Sir! replied the butler, aſſiſtance can come from the immortal Gods alone. Our caſe ſeems to be beyond the arm of humanity to remedy. Each of us have had a dream ominous of ſome important event, but what it may portend is to us a ſecret involved in the moſt cloudy myſtery."

JOSEPH obſerved that dreams are not always to be regarded, and even ſuch as are ſignificant and ominous muſt have their interpretation from heaven. "Will you tell me your dreams, ſaid he, for ſome I have interpreted? And I promiſe you at leaſt I will not deceive you. But it would add greatly to the kindneſs, if you would give me with your dream ſome account of your paſt lives, and I in my turn will freely communicate to you every material part of my own hiſtory."

"I am, ſaid the butler, the only ſon of Arba an Elamite, who dying when I was very young, left me under the care and direction of Athgar, my uncle by my mother's ſide.—The tender and delicate uſage which I experienced from my parents, was changed into rough and rigorous treatment by my uncle; and although ſo very young, I was made to feel the difference between paternal affection, and the guardianſhip of the neareſt kinſman. Poſſeſſed of my father's ſubſtance, which he was to huſband to my advantage, he reliſhed

the ſweets of it ſo much, that he entertained thoughts of keeping it as his own property, and took care to let me know that I was ſolely dependant upon him for the means of my ſubſiſtence. Conſcious that in a land of oppreſſion, where my uncle had principal rule, there was little proſpect of power giving place to equity, I was obliged for my own ſafety patiently to bear my injuries; imagining, upon no ill ground, that complaint of the grievances I ſuffered would only add to the weight of my oppreſſions. It was not long before Cuſhi, an enterpriſing prince of a neighbouring people, upon ſome ſlight pretence quarrelled with the king of Elam and invaded his territories. I was ſent to the war by my uncle's command, and I had reaſon to fear with a view to rid me out of the way. But you may think that I had but little heart to fight in defence of a land where I had ſuffered ſuch baſe oppreſſion. Our army was far from being either ſpirited or diſciplined like the Hummins, under Cuſhi. The Elamites of diſtinction wallowed in luxury, whilſt thoſe of inferior rank groaned under oppreſſion. Therefore, when they came to face the enemy, they could make but a faint reſiſtance, and ſoon ſought for ſafety in rapid flight. Many were cut to pieces as they fled, and many were taken priſoners by the Hummins, amongſt whom I was one. It was my lot to be brought to Memphis, and ſold to one of the ſtewards of

Pharaoh's houſhold; and I muſt ſay in honour of my lord, that I have met with more hoſpitable friendſhip, although a ſlave in the royal palace, than I ever received under my uncle's roof, where my own property ſhould have procured me welcome.

"But the barbarous man did not long enjoy either my eſtate or his own, for the Elamites unable to ſtand before the Hummims, Cuſhi ſoon became maſter of the whole kingdom and divided it among his faithful followers. Meanwhile I was put into the loweſt and moſt ſervile office in the palace; which was much more agreeable to me than to live near to a kinſman, who had in my perſon violated all the laws of hoſpitality. My advancement was by ſlow degrees from one place to another, till it pleaſed his majeſty to enfranchiſe me, and place me near his perſon. I had long ſerved in the capacity of cup-bearer, when his majeſty was taken with a violent diſorder in the viſcera, which phyſicians judged to be the effect of poiſon; and as I had the inſpection of all the wine which he drank, and my friend Labonah of all the fruits and baked meats preſented at the royal table, we were ſeized and committed to priſon till further orders. But far be it from Florillo ſo much as to wiſh the leaſt inconvenience to his royal maſter. May heaven preſerve the life of Pharaoh to be a

bleſſing to the land whatever becomes of me. Laſt night I had a dream which greatly diſturbs me, apparently big with ſome important event. I thought there was a vine before me, which divided itſelf into three luxuriant branches, each of which bloſſomed, budded, and brought forth the moſt delightful grapes that I had ever beheld, and that in the greateſt plenty. I thought that I took of the grapes that were fully ripe and preſſed them into Pharaoh's onyx cup, and preſented to him the moſt mellow and beſt flavoured wine that I remembered ever to have ſeen. His Majeſty drank the wine, and ſmiling ſaid, he hoped I would always procure him ſuch wine as this, upon which I awoke full of anxiety about the event."

"My friend, ſaid the ſon of Jacob, for your having drank of the cup of affliction, entitles you to that endearing appellation. You may make yourſelf very eaſy about your dream, for the God of heaven, who regards the cry of the oppreſſed, ſends you by me a good interpretation of it. Before you was a luxuriant vine, a gift of God to undeſerving men, the fruit of which compoſeth differences, creates friendſhip, diſſolves care and melancholy, and turns our ſadneſs into joy. The three branches, are three days, which ſhall be productive of great events in your favour, for on the third day, the king ſhall raiſe you up out of the priſon, reſtore you to your office,

to the good graces of your maſter, and to the glowing embrace of your wife and children, I beg Florillo, that you may think of me. I have undergone oppreſſions, at leaſt equal to yours, and am here unjuſtly confined, for preferring my own, and my maſter's honour, to the brutal pleaſures of the fleſh. It will be eaſy for you, when you regain your maſter's confidence, to make mention of me to him, and procure my releaſe."

LABONAH, the cook, having heard the favourable interpretation of his companion's dream, and hoping that his would be equally ſo, began and related it to Joſeph, as follows. "I thought I had upon my head, three baſkets made of the whiteſt oſier, filled with proviſion for Pharaoh's table; in the firſt basket was bread, made of the kidney of the fineſt wheat; in the ſecond, were all manner of taſteful viands; and in the third and uppermoſt were ſavory baked meats, ſuch as my maſter loveth. But in ſpite of all my care, as I paſſed along, I could not preſerve my charge from the rapine of the filthy birds, which eat the baked meats out of the uppermoſt baſket." "I pity your circumſtances, my friend, ſaid Joſeph, and wiſh it was in my power to give comfort to you: But your fate, alas! is determined. The baſkets are three days, yet within three days, the king will order you to be beheaded, after which your body will be hanged on a gibbet, and the birds of the air,

will eat the flesh from off your bones, nor will it be in your power to shun the threatening evil. What have you done to deserve it, I know not, but such is the decree of unerring providence. Let me therefore advise you, to make confession to the God of heaven, implore his mercy to pardon your sins, and grace to fit you for another world, for you have little more than two days to live in this. Let your case be ever so desperate, with him there is mercy, and plenteous redemption to them who call upon him."

"I SEE then returned Labonah, that judgment and justice sleepeth not, but sometimes overtakes the offender, when he thinks himself most secure. I am indeed clear from every bad design upon Pharaoh. A thought of poisoning him, never entered my mind. Yet I exasperated him, when I found myself arrested without a cause, and wished the deed to have been done, of which I was accused, that I might have had something worthy of imprisonment and death. But this was only the effect of ungovernable passion: though according to the law of Egypt, it will be deemed high treason, and worthy of death. But alas! although I count myself in this to be innocent, it is long since I merited the death now to be inflicted on me. So that however inequitable I account the sentence of Pharaoh, that of the Gods is just. I am a Lybian by birth, Obed my father, left my elder bro-

ther and I, poſſeſsed of his whole eſtate, which was very conſiderable. Oſmyn, my brother, was induſtrious and frugal, by which means he greatly increaſed his wealth, gained the friendſhip of his ſuperiors, and the veneration of people of lower birth. For my own part I minded nothing but pleaſure, and thoſe were my choiceſt companions, who were the greateſt voluptuaries. By theſe means my wealth was impaired, and I brought to wiſh my niggardly brother, (as I then called him) out of the way, that I might poſſeſs myſelf of his eſtate. Glad would I have been if ſome fatal accident had clipped the thread of his life aſunder, but it was long before I could come to a reſolution to deſtroy him myſelf. However, at laſt, by the advice of a lewd woman, I gave him a poiſon that ſtole inſenſibly into the maſs of blood, and by ſlow degrees ſtopped up the ſprings of life. It was long before its effects became apparent, though at laſt it put a period to his days, and I took poſſeſſion of his eſtate, as being his heir at law. Some years I lived in the quiet enjoyment of the fruits of my brother's toil and my own unrighteouſneſs, when an unhappy circumſtance obliged me to leave all behind, and ſeek for ſafety in a foreign country.

HAVING contracted an intimacy with the wife of a conſiderable man in the neighbourhood, I had the misfortune to ſtay later than

uſual one evening when the huſband was not expected to come home, but to our utter confuſion he entered the chamber and found us converſing criminally together. How nearly alas! is one evil allied to another? To conceal our ſhame, and prevent him from obtaining legal redreſs, I roſe in a fury, flew to my poignard, and plunged it into his breaſt before he had time to reflect on his own diſhonour. As I had perpetrated the horrid deed, I haſted from the ſcene of murder, and retired to reſt in my own apartment. In the third watch of the night, I was ſurpriſed by a ſupernatural light, which darted into my chamber, and illuminated every corner of it. Unuſed to ſuch phœnomena, my blood froze in my veins, my hair ſtood upright on my head, and all the horrors of my guilt ſtared me in the face. The light encreaſed, and I clearly ſaw my brother Oſmyn clad in celeſtial attire, ſtanding by my bed ſide, whilſt he thus addreſſed me. "Wretched Labonah, will thy murdering hand never be tired with ſhedding innocent blood? Was it not enough to poſſeſs yourſelf of my eſtate, by murdering me; but you muſt go and violate your neighbour's bed? And was it not enough that you robbed him of his honour, and his wife of her virtue, but like a villain, inured to bloodſhed, you muſt drench your thirſty ſword in his honourable blood? Do not you fear the awful God, who hates injuſtice and violence, and

with whom no unrepenting murderer can dwell? Can you ſpare no time from your riot and wantonneſs to think but little of the tremendous audit, to which you will ſoon be called? Can you bear an eternity of unſpeakable torment, rather than forego your ſenſual gratifications? It is an awful choice Labonah, yet that choice ſeems to be yours. Ariſe guilty man, ariſe, and flee to ſome foreign country, where the vengeance of man, will not be able to reach thee. But remember, the vengeance of God will follow thee even there, and bring thee to condign puniſhment, both in this life and that which is to come, unleſs thou repenteſt of, and forſakeſt thy vicious habits." So ſaying the viſion departed, and as ſoon as ſomewhat recovered from my fright, I collected all my money and jewels, and inſtantly departed for Egypt; in which kingdom I went through many ſcenes too tedious to mention, before I roſe to the dignity of my late ſtation. Too late I now ſee, that honour and integrity, ſhall preſerve thoſe who are guided thereby, and that however pleaſant, ſenſual indulgencies for the preſent may be, the end of them is bitter as wormwood."

EARLY on the third morning a chariot rolled up to the gates of the priſon, in which was a revered old man, whoſe ſilver hairs hanged down in graceful ringlets upon his ſhoulders; he was come as Florillo's friend, with ſpecial

order to reſtore the cup bearer to his dignity. Along with this ſenior prince, Joſeph beheld a young lady, who gave him much uneaſineſs afterwards. She was that beauteous virgin Aſenath, the only daughter of the prince of On, who was alſo high prieſt of Heliopolis. An artleſs modeſty greatly improved the native elegance and matchleſs graces of her outward form. Her cheeks were a lovely mixture of the roſe and lilly, and her eyes a ſprightly blue. Her hair in careleſs elegance deſcended low, and partly covered the ſtrings of jet and pearl, which adorned her comely neck.—The firſt ſight of her wounded the youthful ſon of Jacob, and kindled an uneaſy unknown paſſion in his heart, till now, he never had felt the vacuum left in his breaſt for his other ſelf. But now the damſel had fixed her empire in his heart, and the lovely image of the fair unknown wantoned perpetually before his eyes, whilſt he languiſhed for the abſent ſubſtance. But hopeleſs was his paſſion, he is a priſoner, accuſed of a capital tranſgreſſion of the laws, and ſhe a perſon of elevated rank. This, this, he cried, muſt confound all my hopes, and I alas! muſt languiſh under a wound incurable.

FLORILLO replaced in his office, a guard arrived at the king's command, and conducted Labonah to the place of execution, where Joſeph's prediction was amply verified upon him. But the courtier advanced again to

favour, forgot the friendſhip of Joſeph the priſoner.

SABRINA's rage had long ſubſided: her deadly hate, returned into female tenderneſs, and kind relentings. Her thoughts repentant, accuſe her raſhneſs. And O! her heart is pierced with poignant pain at the thought, that her mad revenge cauſes him, for whom ſhe languiſheth, to lay in an offenſive dungeon, whilſt ſhe had it not in her power, without expoſing her own ſhame, to adminiſter the leaſt conſolation to the injured victim of her rage; or procure the ſmalleſt degree of relief for herſelf. And thus ſhe languiſhed away a miſerable dying life at home, whilſt Potiphar was dealing ſlaughter and death among the warlike Ethiopians, and Joſeph lay neglected, and forgot in priſon.

" A deep remorſe from conſcience of her ſin,
" With conſtant horrors vex her ſoul within:
" Her thoughts ten thouſand racking torments feel,
" Yet in her treach'rous crime obdurate ſtill;
" Her life and youthful ſpirits melt away,
" Her beauty withers with a ſwift decay:
" By day ſhe wildly raves, conſumes the night,
" In thoughtleſs watchings, & imagin'd fright,
" While airy terrors glide before her ſight:
" Pale ghoſts with wide diſtracted eye-balls ſtare,
" And burning ſpectres, thro' the darkneſs glare."

Row.

THE

LIFE

OF

JOSEPH.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ARGUMENT.

PHARAOH'S two prophetic dreams—The convocation of the clergy—The butler confesseth his neglect of Joseph—informs the king of his sagacity—He is brought into the presence—He interpreteth the dreams—Pharaoh remembers to have seen him in his sleep, as recommended to him, as an assistant in government—He is clothed in rich apparel—Potiphar comes to solicit Joseph's enlargement, Sabrina having confessed the truth to him—He is astonished to find Joseph advanced so near the king—Joseph made lord chancellor of Egypt—builds granaries for receiving corn—The king proposeth a marriage to him—He is greatly perplexed, being already in love with an unknown lady—The match is proposed to the princess Asenath, who rejects it, having been in love with the Hebrew, who rescued Sabrina from the lion, and not knowing that lord chancellor was he—Their astonishment and joy at meeting, when Joseph finds Asenath to be the lady whom he had loved with such vehemence, and Asenath found her lovely Hebrew, to be the very person designed for her—The death of Judah's sons—it renews his sorrow for his violence to Joseph.

BOOK V.

THE time of Joſeph's ſufferings elapſed; on the very night before his enlargement the monarch had two heaven-inſpired dreams which baffled the skill of all his diviners. He fancied himſelf by the ſide of the river Nile, where the monſters of the flood ſport themſelves on the oozy ſhore; he ſaw ſeven oxen of an enormous ſize, fat and well-fed, aſcend out of the river; and feed upon the herbage of the neighbouring verdant meadow: afterwards aroſe ſeven meagre and ill looking beaſts, upon which there ſeemed hardly to be fleſh enough to keep their bones together; they alſo went and grazed on the ſame meadow, and preſently devoured all its verdure. Still hungry they ſet upon the fat oxen and eat up them likewiſe, and yet continued lean and hungry as ever. A ſight ſo ſtrange in itſelf, impreſſed the monarch's mind ſo deeply that he awoke in confuſion, and ſleep departed from his eyes. Towards morning he dreamed again, and lo! he was in the midſt of a fertile field, admiring the gifts of Ceres, when

to his wonder and ſurpriſe, there ſprang up inſtantaneouſly ſeven of the largeſt and loveliest ears of wheat that ever the earth produced, and preſently after there ſprang up beſide them ſeven thin and blaſted ears, which contained nothing at all but duſt and chaff; and what was very ſtrange, the thin and blaſted ears fell upon and devoured the others, yet ſtill continued thin and blaſted themſelves as before. Such were the dreams of Pharaoh, and the interpretation was given him likewiſe in his ſleep, but awaking in confuſion of mind the interpretation was gone and he retained only the dreams. Early in the morning he ſummoned a convocation of all ſuch doctors in the metropolis, that were famous for learning in the Egyptian ſciences. Each appeared in the habit of his order, trailing behind him the enſigns of his reverence. But all in vain their prieſtly parade; for the dumb idols which they adored could not ſpeak the interpretation of the myſtery. Every prieſt has recourſe to different ſchemes of augury, and each produced different interpretations from his neighbours, but all of them rejected by the king, who well enough knew that none of them agreed with the interpretation that he had ſeen in his ſleep, although he could not remember it himſelf. All the attempts of the prieſts became abortive, and Pharaoh's rage kindling againſt them for their impoſitions; the cup-bearer recollected his

error, haſtened before the king, and thus humbly addreſſed him :

"O KING live forever! I humbly ſue for pardon, as I have greatly offended, and have not till now recollected my fault. Your Majeſty may well remember that falling under your royal diſpleaſure the chief baker and I were impriſoned. It came to paſs that each of us had a dream on the ſame night which greatly troubled us, as no interpretation could be found. I dreamed that before me was a noble vine bearing three luxuriant branches, each of which budded, bloſſomed, and bro't forth large cluſters of grapes which ripened whilſt I looked on, I held my lord's onyx cup in my hand; took the grapes and preſſed them into it and gave it into the hand of my lord to drink, your majeſty drank and was highly pleaſed with the flavour of the wine. The baker alſo dreamed, and lo! upon his head were three baskets, in the uppermoſt of which was all manner of baked meat for Pharaoh, and as he brought them to the royal table, the birds of heaven deſcended and eat the meats out of the baſket, nor could he keep them away. The next morning as we ſat ſad and ſorrowful, an amiable young man, an Hebrew, in whom is the ſpirit of the holy Gods, and whom is there unjuſtly confined, came in and interpreted both our dreams according to the event. The happy Florillo he reſtored to his maſter's favour; but the wret-

ched Labonah he hanged. Will it pleaſe my lord the king to order the young man before you, and I doubt not but he will interpret both of your majeſty's dreams."

THE impatient monarch immediately ordered Joſeph to be brought from priſon into the royal preſence. Cloathed in decent apparel he came ready prepared to give the king an anſwer; for Gabriel his friendly guardian had appeared to him, and related both the dreams and interpretation of them, and withal gave him ſuitable inſtructions relative to the government of Egypt.—As he approached the throne with reverence, the eyes of all were attracted by the graces of his perſon, which were greatly enlivened by the bluſh of modeſty, which glowed upon his countenance. He bowed before the monarch, and ſilently waited his commands.

THE moment that Pharaoh beheld the face of Joſeph, he ſaw ſomething in his countenance that attracted his friendſhip; he took him gently by the hand and ſaid, "there is a ſervant of mine, who has given you the character of a very wiſe man, eſpecially in the matter of opening hidden myſteries, of which he ſays, he had abundant proof in his own experience. I alſo had my dreams, the interpretation of which is dark and difficult, yet portending ſome great event." Here he related his dreams, and required that Joſeph

would lay aſide all fear, and reveal the ſimple truth, however diſagreeable it might ſeem.

WITH a calm and and ſerene countenance, yet with an elevated air, that diſplayed the majeſtic dignity of his perſon, he replied. "Let Pharaoh give glory to the God of heaven, who in his great condeſcenſion, makes known unto the king what he is about to bring to paſs on the earth: The dreams, my lord, were two in form, yet one in ſubſtance and ſignification. The firſt ſeven oxen and ears of corn, both mean the ſame thing, and reveal to Pharaoh, that there ſhall be ſeven years of ſuch exceſſive plenty of all ſorts of grain, as was never known in any kingdom from the beginning; as appears by the bulk and fatneſs of the firſt ſeven ears of corn. The ſecond ſeven meagre and ill-looking cattle, and the ſeven thin and blaſted ears, denote alſo ſeven years of ſuch ſcarcity, as has never been known in the world, for there ſhall be neither earing nor harveſt; and whereas the latter lean and ill-looking cattle, eat up the fat, and well favoured, and the thin and blaſted ears, devoured thoſe that were ripe and full; it ſhows that the ſeven years of plenty, will not produce ſufficient to ſupply the ſeven years of famine, unleſs the beſt œconomy is eſtabliſhed in the land. Let my Lord the king conſider, that the great governor of all, raiſeth up certain men, to ſover-

eign rule over their fellow-creatures, that they may be as fathers unto them, and provide for their peace, ſafety and ſupply. Thy God, O Pharaoh, who eſtabliſhed thy throne, hath not revealed this to thee, with a view to afflict thy royal mind, but that by taking proper meaſures for preſerving the luxuriant ſuperfluity of the firſt ſeven years, thou mayeſt be able to ſupply the wants of thy people, during the ſeven years famine, that they periſh not with hunger. Wherefore my advice is, that your majeſty look out for ſome wiſe and honeſt man, ſuitably qualified, and give him a commiſſion for this purpoſe, that the burden may be the lighter upon the king."

THE king looked with admiration at Joſeph, all the while he was ſpeaking, aſtoniſhed to find ſo much wiſdom in a youth, and as ſoon as he had done ſpeaking, ſprung from the throne, and graſped him in his arms, with all the ardour of friendſhip, and ſaid, "Yes, this is the interpretation, and thou art the man, who was preſented to me in my ſleep, to be my aſſiſtant in a work ſo great; I embrace thee therefore, as one ſent by the God of heaven, to be a ſaviour to the people. And where, my lords, ſaid he to his courtiers, ſhall we find one endued with wiſdom and diſcretion equal to him." Now the butler, who all this time ſtood by, a ſilent but delighted auditor, came up, aad tenderly embraced his quondam friend, begged pardon for his long

neglect, and hoped that Joſeph would not impute it to want of regard. Joſeph told him, that the Lord's time was not till now come.

THE king then gave command to the maſter of his wardrobe, to take Joſeph away and clothe him in ſuperb array. Juſt as he departed from the king's preſence one of the lords in waiting entered, and informed his majeſty, that Potiphar, his general waited in the hall, and requeſted a private audience upon matters of great importance. Let him come in, ſaid the king, for he is a good man. The king retired with Potiphar, into an antichamber, and thus he preferred his ſuit.—"May it pleaſe your majeſty, immediately before I went by your commiſſion againſt the Ethiopians, I committed the ſteward of my houſe to priſon, on my wife's accuſing him with an attempt to raviſh her; it was indeed my intent, to have ſpoke to your majeſty, to have had him put to death; but thanks to the Gods, the ſuddenneſs of the invaſion, and the urgency of the king's command, together with my regard for the public good, made me utterly forget my own affairs. My wife upon my return hath withdrawn her charge, intreating me to procure his releaſe, and indemnify him for his unjuſt impriſonment. This favour therefore, I would humbly intreat of your majeſty, and if it is agreeable, to take him under your ſacred protection, for he is one of the moſt virtuous and wiſe

of the human race. Glad ſhould I be to enjoy him as my friend and companion in my own houſe; but circumſtances forbid his readmiſſion there."

THE king heard with attention, and rightly ſuſpecting that Joſeph was the perſon in queſtion, ordered him to be brought again into his preſence. But how great was Potiphar's ſurpriſe, to ſee his friend, his ill uſed Joſeph, brought unto the king clothed in purple, with a chain of gold and diamonds about his neck. He ſtood motionleſs for ſome time, then with an agitated voice, he abruptly ſaid, "it is he" And flying to his embrace, he held him as if he grew unto him. Joſeph equally aſtoniſhed on his part, to find ſuch a change, ſaid, "I rejoice, my maſter, once more to embrace you as my friend; and indeed, ſir, I never gave you cauſe to be otherwiſe." "I know it Joſeph, I know it, returned he, but if his majeſty will permit me, I will give you an account how it is that my friendſhip hath returned to its proper channel.

"You told me Joſeph, on that deteſted night that I ſent you to the dungeon, that the God whom you and your fathers adore, would by ſome means or other clear up your innocence, and detect the guilt of your accuſers. It is done my friend, your prediction is fulfilled. Your poor unhappy miſtreſs has paid dearly for her folly; ſhe is a proper object of your pity, let her then be ever free

from your reſentment. The accurſed nurſe, the wretched Syrena, was more to blame than my fond Sabrina. But I was more to blame than both. How could I think that female virtue, could be inſenſible of your attracting charms? I delighted to preſent you to her, rejoiced to ſee her at any time look friendly upon you, not conſidering the danger to which I expoſed my poor unhappy wife. Whereas I ought to have concealed you entirely from her ſight. But I expoſed her to the ſnare, and I wonder not if ſhe was entangled. I grieved to ſee her beauty fade away like the decaying roſe, and all her wonted vivacity changed into a ſettled melancholy. She loſt all her taſte for pleaſure, for amuſements, company, or dreſs; her ſleep was unſeaſonable, and diſturbed with diſtreſſed dreams —And oft have I heard her in ſecret mourning her betrayed lord Potiphar. Cautious of adding to her diſtreſs, I avoided ſearching into the cauſe of it. Till laſt night, ſhe ſent for me into her apartment, where ſhe has been for ſeveral days confined to her bed dangerouſly ill of a fever. "O my lord! ſaid ſhe, can you forgive the moſt wretched creature, that ever was confided in by an indulgent and over credulous huſband? I have betrayed you my lord, and I cannot die without informing you of my guiltineſs. Had the injured Hebrew been no more virtuous than Sabrina, your bed had been ſtained with the vileſt pol-

lution." What, cried I, is he not guilty? "No, my lord, returned ſhe, he is not guilty, his virtue is inflexible. Neither tears, intreaties nor threats could ſhake his ſteady mind. He truſted in his God, and was delivered. I alone am guilty. I conceived an involuntary paſſion for him, the firſt time you preſented him to me. Conſcious of its baſeneſs, I did what I could to ſtifle it; but do what I would, it grew ſtronger upon me, till it burned as a flame intolerable. Encouraged by my nurſe, I gave ſcope to my wild deſires, did all that I could to entice him, but to no purpoſe. His regard to his God, and his maſter, prevailed over all my charms and ſnares; and by his ſtability he hath convinced me, that there is ſomething in piety and virtue, which I am unacquainted with. O my lord! may I hope to hear the voice of your forgiveneſs before I depart. And O! how heartily could I beg forgiveneſs of injured virtue, was I not fearful that the ſight of the Hebrew would overcome me."

"YES Sabrina, replied I, I forgive you with all my heart; this frank confeſſion, is a certain ſign of returning virtue. I embrace you my love, and will haſten Joſeph's enlargement and reinſtate him in the family. "Oh! never, never, anſwered ſhe; I ſhall not dare to behold him again; for although I feel nothing but the moſt laudable friendſhip for him now, I ſhall never dare to expoſe my weak-

neſs to danger ſo imminent any more. Do you my lord, what you can to ſerve him in any other way, but do not let me ſee him. When I am dead you may uſe your diſcretion, but ſave your poor, weak and unſtable ſpouſe from temptation! She ſaid, and I promiſing to comply with her requeſt, left her to reſt. Having unburdened her mind, ſhe ſlept compoſedly all the night, and I have not ſeen ſuch calm ſerenity on her countenance for a long time, as this morning when I viſited her, before I came to wait on his majeſty.

"But I ſee Joſeph that your God in whom you truſted, would not permit Potiphar to have the pleaſure of preſenting you to the king: but whoſoever he is, that has that honour, ſhall be my friend forever." Pharaoh replied, "Joſeph hath preferred himſelf to my regard, and your ſtory Potiphar hath rivited him in my eſteem. It ſerves to illuſtrate and confirm what the native lovelineſs of his features indicate; and let me ſay, it does not a little embelliſh the character of my noble captain, to be ſo ready to repair an injury done through miſinformation. Go home, my good lord, and let poor, penitent Sabrina know, that Joſeph is ſecond in dignity and power in the kingdom of *Egypt*. The particulars of which, you ſhall be informed of Potiphar, at another time."

The ſame virtue that enabled Joſeph to bear with fortitude the adverſity to which his

innocence had expoſed him, enabled him now to hear his praiſe echoed from one to another without pride or vanity. His purple robe, and almoſt imperial dignity, altered not the native humility and modeſty of his mind whereby he retained his dignity unenvied by thoſe of inferior rank.

PHARAOH iſſued a royal proclamation, in which he nominated Joſeph as high ſteward of *Egypt*, and required all his ſubjects, of what rank ſoever, to be aiding and aſſiſting him, in whatſoever work he ſhould undertake —or in whatſoever elſe he might require. Joſeph, on his part behaved with ſo much equity, diſcretion and benevolence, that the people in general rejoiced to ſee the reins of government put into a hand ſo ſuitable.

ADVANCED to power, the firſt thing he did was to eſtabliſh the ſtricteſt œconomy at court, to abridge the king's expences, as much as conſiſted with the dignity of ſo great a monarch, that the exchequer might furniſh him money ſufficient to buy up all the overplus of annual grain, and provide proper repoſitories for receiving it when purchaſed. A ſquare mile, on a pleaſant meadow adjoining to Memphis, was ſelected for the ſeat of his granaries. The ſpring approached, and every thing in nature appeared to bear a fertile appearance, for the earth brought forth not in its uſual courſe, but in great abundance. At the cloſe of the year Joſeph iſſued a proclama-

tion, wherein he ſignified by royal authority, that at the king's granaries a certain price would be given for all the corn that ſhould be delivered to the ſervants in waiting. The proclamation brought prodigious quaintities of corn from all parts of the kingdom, as ſoon as the overflowing of the Nile enabled them to bring it by water carriage and this was continued annually for the ſpace of ſeven years, by which time he had filled every place that he could procure with grain.

One day king Pharaoh took him into his cloſet, and thus addreſſed him, "Joſeph I and Egypt in general have reaſon to conſider you as a preſerver and redeemer, raiſed up unto us againſt the day of calamity. As your God has been pleaſed to ſend you amongſt us, it behoves us to do what we can to make your accommodation agreeable. I have propoſed a match for you Joſeph. Nay, do not be ſurprized: it is with one of the firſt ladies of the Egyptian empire for birth, beauty and virtue. I intend to beſpeak her for you this very day. Had I a daughter of my own, that I deemed worthy of you, ſhe ſhould be your bride; but as I cannot thus gratify myſelf, I have ſought out one to whom I think, even the greateſt of monarchs can have no objection." "I beg, ſaid Joſeph, that your majeſty will leiſurely think of it, before you propoſe a matter of ſuch importance. How

would a princeſs of Egypt be debaſed in being given to a mean and once unhappy foreigner, whoſe birth comparatively is obſcure?" "Say no more of it replied the king, for the matter is already determined. It will be an honour to the greateſt princeſs to be advanced to your bed."

This advantageous offer, met not with that agreeable reception with Joſeph, as one would have expected. The fair unknown whom he had ſeen whilſt a priſoner, had captivated his heart: for her he languiſhed in ſecret, and could admit of no thoughts of another to have place in his mind. He knew not well how to conduct himſelf in a matter ſo delicate, but at all events he reſolved to do no injuſtice to his firſt love, although unknown, by admitting a ſecond to his embrace.—Prince Potipherah being then at court, king Pharaoh propoſed to him a match between Joſeph, lord high-chancellor of the kingdom, and the lovely Aſenath, his virtuous daughter. The propoſal was heartily embraced by the reverend prince, and at his maſter's command he went home to conſult his daughter's inclinations. But how great was his ſurpriſe to find Aſenath utterly averſe to the honourable compact. "I entreat my father, ſhe cried, with tears like pearls dropping down her cheeks; I entreat that you will not oblige me to marry a man for whom I have not the ſlighteſt degree of deſire, and who ſince this propoſal

is become the object of my real averſion." "What objection can you have Aſenath, replied he, to the lord high-chancellor, the favourite of both king and people? Inconſiderate woman, it is the greateſt honour the king can confer upon you; and I inſiſt on your embracing it, otherwiſe give me a plain account of your reaſons for refuſing it." "Ah, Sir! ſaid ſhe, the lord high-chancellor is not the man who can make me happy, and I would not marry till I can have the proſpect of being happy in my huſband."

Young Aſenath was one of the party, who to grace the nuptials of Potiphar and Sabrina, went to hunt the monſters of the deſart, and had ſeen the young Hebrew's diſtinguiſhed gallantry, in reſcuing his miſtreſs from the ferocity of the deſperate lion. Her young and tender heart, could not but feel the impreſſion of the many graces of his amiable perſon! but his generous valour moſt ſenſibly touched her. In ſhort ſhe conceived a moſt ardent and virtuous paſſion for him, and reſolved that if ever ſhe ſhould enter into the marriage relation, Joſeph, the gallant Hebrew, ſhould be the man of her choice. But ſeeing nothing of him for a long time, ſhe conceived a diſlike to all other men: and notwithſtanding the fame of the lord high-chancellor reſounded through every Egyptian manſion, ſhe never had the curioſity ſo much as to look upon him.

It was inſiſted on however, by Pharaoh and Potipherah, that ſhe ſhould have an interview with Joſeph; notwithſtanding, they had both of them too much goodneſs, abſolutely to force the inclinations of either. But when they met, what a delightful ſurpriſe was it to Joſeph to realiſe in Aſenath the features, the air, and the very perſon of the lovely virgin, whom he had ſeen whilſt a priſoner; and for whom, altho' unknown, he had renounced the whole female race? Nor was Aſenath's ſurpriſe inferior in viewing in the perſon of lord high-chancellor, every feature and geſture of her almoſt adored Hebrew. Never did two come together with more conſummate averſion to each other, and never were two more agreeably diſappointed. "And is it you my lovely fair, for whom I ſo long have ſighed, that unknown to me his majeſty deſigned for my ſpouſe? ſaid Joſeph, O my love, you cannot conceive what antipathy I entertained againſt you; but bleſſed be the God of heaven, who brings the object of my warmeſt wiſhes to my boſom." "And can it be poſſible that you my lord are the very deliverer of the fair Sabrina, ſaid Aſenath? Ever ſince that jovial day, the noble, the gallant Hebrew, has been the ſole lord of all my affections. What a bleſſed Providence is this, that crowns my wiſhes by contracting my inclination; for I hated you, Joſeph, I hated the Lord high-chancellor of Egypt, for

the ſake of an amiable Hebrew. Let us adore the wiſdom and goodneſs of that God who has in ſuch a deſirable manner diſappointed our fears." The nuptials were ſolemnized the enſuing day, in the preſence of the monarch. Great joy abounded amongſt the people upon the occaſion, and every body wiſhed proſperity to the new married couple.

WHILST Joſeph continued proſperouſly to govern Egypt, it pleaſed God to viſit eloquent Judah with a remembrance of his former treachery. Er, his firſt born, mature in years, married a damſel whoſe name was Tamar, young, beautiful, and virtuous; in many reſpects ſurpaſſing her fellows. Er, was atheiſtical and profligate, diſregarded the commands of Abraham's God; and ſought only to gratify a ſenſual appetite, and wallow in the pleaſures of the fleſh. Judah and Shuah his parents, endeavoured to correct the irregularities of his life, by wholeſome precepts and examples; but all their inſtructions he fooliſhly rejected, and ſought for death in the error of his way. His diſpoſition was the very reverſe of Joſeph's amiable qualities; virtue was the delight of the one, but vice alone was the purſuit of the other. It happened on a day, that Er was ſent to a diſtant part of the country upon ſome rural buſineſs, when going paſt a fatal thicket, a panther ſprung from the midſt of it, and inſtantly tore him to pie-

ces. Not returning at the time expected, meſſengers were diſpatched to ſeek for him, and found him miſerably torn by that monſter of the wood. Then it was that Judah began to realize in his own experience, the heart wringing agonies of his father upon Joſeph's bloody coat being preſented to him. Then the pathetic addreſs of his ſuppliant brother, begging for life, returned to his mind, with all its affecting circumſtances. And to the loſs of his ſon, he had the painful reflection of its being a juſt judgment of the Omnipotent upon him, for having joined his brethren to bring affliction upon choſen Jacob.

THAT the name of the elder born might not become extinct in Judah's family, Tamar was given to Onan, that ſeed might be raiſed up to his deceaſed brother. But Onan's heart being attracted by other charms, and knowing that ſhould the marriage bed become fruitful, the children would not bear his name, he took care to prevent the fruits of their intercourſe, though he did not altogether deny the pleaſures of the conjugal ſtate. What he did, was offenſive to the eye of infinite holineſs, and the moſt high to avenge himſelf of his impiety, ſtruck him dead with a blaſt of lightning darted from the æreal ſtores of wrath.

O JUDAH! how ſenſibly was thy heart affected by this ſecond ſtroke of the divine hand? How didſt thou read thy ſin in thy puniſhment! Both thy ſons ſnatched away by

death, in the prime of their days. Tamar, thy daughter in law, had the bitterneſs of burying two huſbands, ere ſhe reached the meridian of life. Shelah alone, young and tender, ſupport the hopes of thy family. How did thy heart pant with jealous fear, leſt vengeance ſhould write thee down childleſs, and ſummon young Shelah to follow his elder brethren. Nothing but the fear of Simeon and Levi, kept Judah back from making a full confeſſion of his guilt before the venerable patriarch. But the fear of them reſtrained him ſtill from duty, eſpecially as he could never hear in what manner the Iſhmaelites had diſpoſed of Joſeph.

THE

LIFE

OF

JOSEPH.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ARGUMENT.

JOSEPH purchaseth all the spare corn in Egypt, for seven years—The famine begins to be felt—Jacob sendeth his sons down to Egypt to buy corn—Simeon's dream by the way—They are brought before Joseph—He knows them, but they know not him—He questions them strictly, and chargeth them with being spies—They study to clear themselves of the charge—He proposeth to send one of them to bring Benjamin down—That is objected to, on account of Israel and his family—They are imprisoned three days—The brethren reason concerning their cruelty to Joseph, and consider all this as the hand of God upon them—Simeon bound and cast into prison—The rest set out on their journey—They are surprised at finding their money returned in their sacks—They arrive in Canaan, and relate to their father all that befell them in Egypt—Long discourse between Jacob and them, upon their present circumstances—They persuade Jacob to send Benjamin along with them—Jacob favoured with a divine vision, and is comforted.

BOOK VI.

PHARAOH had ſuch proofs daily of Joſeph's wiſdom and fidelity, that he fixed no limits to his power; whatever was done throughout the land of Egypt, he was the doer of it, and whatever he did proſpered in his hand. His equipage was next in grandeur to that of his majeſty himſelf, and only in the throne was Pharaoh greater than he. He went through the whole kingdom, provided granaries, appointed deputies in every province for purchaſing of all ſorts of grain, the advantage of which was afterwards found not only by the Egyptians but other kingdoms adjacent.

As his duty and pleaſure run in the ſame channel, he collected corn ſufficient, during the ſeven years of plenty, to ſupply the Egyptian empire for twice ſeven years of famine, had it been the pleaſure of God to continue it ſo long; and this he was prompted to by his native benevolence, that thereby he might aſſiſt other diſtreſſed ſtates. Never was a perſon more venerated than Joſeph was by the Egyptians, when they ſaw every thing come to paſs according to his prediction. All held

him to be a peculiar favourite of the Gods, and many of the vulgar could not help believing him to be ſome celeſtial deity, come down in human form to be the preſerver of their beloved nation. For the Egyptians were under no doubt at all, that they were the people moſt dear to heaven. What different treatment did Elijah meet with from the ſeed of Iſrael, when he foretold the famine that fell out in his days? He was accounted the troubler of Iſrael, and was glad to fly for his life.

JOSEPH had continued to purchaſe corn for the ſpace of ſeven years; but ſuch was now the will of providence, that the rains fell not at their ſeaſon upon the mountains of Abyſſinia, in their uſual quantity, to feed the ſtreams of the Nile. So that the waters meaſured not above ſeven cubits upon the Nile-ſcope. A quantity ſcarce ſufficient to water the very loweſt parts of the country. Of courſe there was very little grain produced in any part of the land, and that which grew was like Pharaoh's thin ears, not worth the reaping. Now the famine began ſenſibly to be felt in the land of Canaan; and the Egyptians applied in their turn to their provident governor, to purchaſe food for their families.

The aged patriarch ſeeing the approach of pale hunger towards his family, made diligent enquiry where food might be procured for money; and being informed that in Egypt only there was corn. He aſſembled his de-

ſcendants, and thus addreſſed them. "You ſee my ſons, that the allwiſe Governor provoked by the ſins of men, has denied the firſt and latter rains in their ſeaſon. Thoſe lofty ſeas which ride upon the air, are not ſuffered to deſcend and viſit the thirſty world. You ſee there is neither earing nor harveſt in the land, our family proviſion is almoſt exhauſted and ghaſtly famine makes haſty ſtrides towards the dwelling of Iſrael. But why ſtand we gazing fearfully at one another? Let us uſe the means of ſupport whilſt in our power. We can but die, when the means of life have forſaken us. I am informed that fertile Egypt abounds with proviſion, whilſt the reſt of the world is ſtarving for want; and that ſo hoſpitable is the governor of that land, that he ſends none away empty who apply unto him for relief. Ariſe therefore my ſons, go down thither, and bring us proviſion for money; for money will be uſeleſs to us, when the ſtaff of bread is cut off from our mouths. Thus ſhall ye avoid ſeeing your wives and children periſh for want of ſuſtenance—Go all of you except Benjamin. I deſire that he may be left to ſuperintend our domeſtic affairs in your abſence." Benjamin being all that the patriarch now poſſeſſed of his dear departed Rachel, he could not bear the tho'ts of his being expoſed to the dangers of ſuch a journey.

THE ſons of Iſrael readily agreed to his propoſal, and departed the enſuing morning towards Egypt. Two days before they arrived at the capital, in the dead of the night as they ſlept in the inn, Simeon dreamed that he was at Dothan along with his brethren conſulting the death of Joſeph; which being determined, he thought that juſt as they were going to caſt him into the pit, an inviſible hand was ſtretched down from heaven, ſnatched Joſeph from the threatening danger, and carried him out of their ſight. And as it liſted Joſeph from the earth, with a joſtle tumbled Simeon himſelf into the pit deſigned for his brother. Alarmed with his danger, he awoke in a fright ere he reached the bottom. Hard as his flinty heart was, the impreſſion of this dream made him realize the anxiety of Joſeph's mind on that day of his calamity.—Nor could he, notwithſtanding his reſolution and courage, prevent his heart being dejected under the apprehenſion that his dream was ominous of ſome event fatal to his peace. Therefore the reſt of the journey was dull and unpleaſant to him.

JOSEPH by the ſpirit of propheſy knew that the famine was extenſive, and reached even to the land of his fathers; and therefore conjectured that amongſt the many who came for proviſion, his brethren alſo might arrive; therefore deſcribed them to his ſteward, and directed him, that if ſuch men ſhould arrive,

that they ſhould not be ſerved before they were brought before him. Accordingly when they came and applied at the granaries for corn, they were directed to wait on the governor's ſteward, who told them he could not poſſibly give them an anſwer till his maſter, the lord high chancellor, came home. But that being only gone out with his majeſty for an airing, he would have them abide near the palace till noon, about which time he expected his return. They did ſo, and beheld ſuch dazzling ſplendour in the king's and Joſeph's equipage as they had never ſeen at any time before.

BROUGHT before Joſeph, he immediately recollected the features of every countenance, but they had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of him; and notwithſtanding his eminent meekneſs and humanity, he could not help the recollection of their baſeneſs. The ſight of them brought all his ſufferings afreſh to his mind. They bow before him with the moſt humble reverence, with their faces towards the earth, and wait for him to ask their buſineſs. This brought his dreams alſo to his mind, and with a borrowed ſternneſs he demanded their buſineſs with him, and directed his eye chiefly to Simeon.

JUDAH replied, for he was ſpeaker at this time for the reſt. "May it pleaſe your excellency, we are from the land of Canaan.—Being preſſed with the famine in our native

country, hearing that there was plenty of corn in Egypt, and alſo the fame of the governor's hoſpitality, we were induced to come down to purchaſe a little food for ourſelves, our wives and children, that they periſh not in the general ſcarcity."

"TELL me not, ſaid he with with a menacing countenance, of ſuch men as you being concerned in traffic. There is ſomething in each of you that beſpeaks you ſprung from no common race; for by your deportment you might be the ſons of a king. I ſuſpect you to be men of birth, ſervants of ſome martial, enterpriſing ſtate, come under this diſguiſe to ſpy out the nakedneſs of the land."

"No my lord, returned the parent of the Jews. We are no ſpies, but true men; by the nakedneſs of our own country, forced to ſeek for proviſion in a land more bleſſed with the bounties of providence. We are ſtrangers to court intrigue, and have no concern in martial atchievements. Whatever may be the appearances of our perſons, your excellency may aſſure yourſelf that all our concern has been about cattle from our infancy. For your ſervants are not courtiers but ſimple ſhepherds, and our only buſineſs in Egypt is to procure food for our families, for which we are very willing to pay whatever my lord may demand."

"No, no, returned Joſeph, ſuch men as you have not the appearance of ſhepherds.

Nor does your eloquence my friend diſcover you to be an attendant on the bleating herd. You would not be proper agents for carrying on a treacherous deſign againſt our ſtate, if you had not ſagacity to cover it over with diſſimulation and guile. I tell you, you are ſpies, come with a bad deſign againſt the ſtate."

"FAR be it my lord, ſaid Judah from your ſervants to be guilty of the diſſimulation that your Excellency ſpeaks of. I aſſure you that we are all ſhepherds, as our fathers for ſome generations backward have been. We are the deſcendants of Abraham, whoſe name perhaps your excellency has heard of. We ten are brethren, ſons of one man in the land of Canaan. One remains this day with our father, and the other, alas! is not now numbered among his brethren."

"WELL, replied Joſeph, ye declare your innocence in point of treachery. But I ſhall not take your bare word for it, but will prove you, and if ye bear the trial and approve yourſelves to be true men and no ſpies, you ſhall find in me a friend: and you ſhall have liberty to go and come at your pleaſure, and traffic in all the coaſts of Egypt; but if it is found that ye are traitors and ſpies, ye ſhall ſurely be put to death. By this ſhall you prove yourſelves to be honeſt men. Let one of you be diſpatched to your father's houſe and fetch that younger brother of whom you

ſpeak, and then will it appear that your words are right. If you refuſe this, it is a ſign that your purpoſe is bad, and as ſure as Pharaoh lives ye are ſpies upon our ſtate."

"No, my lord we are not ſpies indeed, anſwered Judah with a ſubmiſſive voice, notwithſtanding we have one reaſon wherefore we cannot with pleaſure ſubmit to your excellency's command. And that is not fear of being detected as ſpies: but the famine of our houſes. For we left but barely ſufficient to ſupply the wants of our wives and children, during the time neceſſary for us to come hither for food, and return again unto them. If we ſhould do as my lord hath ſaid, then muſt all our father's houſe periſh for want in our abſence, and we ſhould be guilty of their blood. Wherefore if nothing but that will ſatisfy your excellency of our fidelity, it is better for us to ſubmit to death in a ſtrange land, than to be witneſſes of the evil to come on our deareſt kindred; for we cannot ſurvive the deſtruction of our father's houſe."

Joſeph commanded his guards in waiting to take the ten brethren into cuſtody and carry them to priſon, where he kept them three days and three nights; but withal he gave ſecret orders to his ſtewards to look well to them, to their ſervants and cattle, that they ſhould lack nothing. On the third morning, as ſoon as the ſun enlightened the earth he ordered them all before him, and thus he ad-

dreſſed them. "I have conſidered all that you have ſaid, when you were laſt before me, and as there is a poſſiblity of your teſtimony being true, I would not expoſe your old father of whom ye ſpake, nor your wives and little ones, to the ſeverity of famine; for, I fear God, and am no ſtranger to the feelings of humanity. One condition I propoſe to you, which muſt and ſhall be complied with, and that is, one of you ſhall be left bound in the houſe of your priſon, as an hoſtage to inſure your return; and all the reſt of you ſhall go to your families, with what proviſion you can carry, and when ye come again be ſure you bring your younger brother along with you. Which if you do, your hoſtage ſhall be delivered up to you, and you ſhall all go in peace again to your father. But, if you return not, he who I ſhall ſecure as an hoſtage ſhall pay for your unfaithfulneſs with his life."

"O SAID Judah, how doth one ſin bring a laſting train of evils after it? Er and Onan are fallen victims to that juſtice which avengeth Joſeph's afflictions. Another is now demanded, and who knows what the iſſue will be? The guilt of our brother's blood purſues us, and embitter's every Providence. Our God leaves us to intreat in vain; becauſe when we ſaw the anguiſh of his afflicted ſoul, we would ſhew him no mercy, although he beſought us with tears. Lord, thy conduct is juſt, we alone are guilty."

"DID not I, ſaid Reuben, do what I could to diſſuade you from a deed ſo vile and barbarous? I uſed every argument, I was maſter of, to prevail with you to ſave the child's life, but all in vain. And with a view to be able to reſtore him to his father's embrace, I propoſed his being let down into the pit, and had performed my purpoſe the enſuing night, had I not been prevented by your untimely ſale of him to ſtrangers, who have carried him I know not whither. But the all-ſeeing and ever watchful providence, I doubt not ſheltered him from injury in ſome country more hoſpitable, and affords him that peace and pleaſure which he was denied in the houſe of his brethren, whilſt we, his perſecutors, are juſtly purſued by the avenging hand of Joſeph's God."

"I FREELY confeſs, ſaid Simeon, that I never felt a proper remorſe for that ſin againſt my brother till five nights ago, when I realized the anguiſh of his ſoul in what I myſelf felt in my dream. And from what I then felt I have reaſon to fear that ſomething of a very afflicting nature is before me, for I found myſelf exactly in Joſeph's circumſtances when he was laſt in the pit: ſince then my mind has never been free from either the diſtreſſing idea of the boy's anxiety, or the overwhelming grief of our poor father, when Levi and I preſented the bloody coat to him at Mamre. But let what will come, I find I de-

ſerve it. I ſhould wiſh to be as ſubmiſſive in my affliction, as I was reſolute in perpetrating the guilty deed."

LITTLE did the ſons of Jacob imagine, that the lord high chancellor underſtood their diſcourſe, for the better to conceal his relation to them, he had ſpoken all along by an interpreter, whom he cauſed to withdraw as ſoon as his brethren began to conſer among themſelves. With all the diſtance that Joſeph affected, with all the reſolution he could ſummon up, he could not ſuppreſs the riſing tide of fraternal ſympathy, ready to guſh from his eyes upon hearing his brethrens' penitent conference; therefore he turned him into a private apartment, and gave free vent to the emotions of his manly heart. And as ſoon as he had compoſed himſelf he returned to them into the hall, and communed with them about the affairs of their native country, till their ſacks were filled and their camels and aſſes loaded with corn. But never was there ſuch a ſtruggle between ſound policy and brotherly tenderneſs, as Joſeph felt in his diſturbed mind. Brotherly love urged him to fly to the embraces of his brethren, but ſound policy adviſed to ſtay his careſſes, till he had proved their regard to Benjamin his brother.—Sound policy will prevail over paſſion, where wiſdom preſides.

IT was juſt as Simeon's foreboding heart had preſaged, for Joſeph ſelected him from

amongſt his brethren, to detain him as an hoſtage for the return of the reſt; although it went now againſt the tenderneſs of his inclination to give pain even to Simeon, ſince he had ſome proof of his penitence. But he found himſelf under a neceſſity of either detaining one or diſcovering himſelf to them; the latter of which he choſe not to do for the preſent. Simeon was therefore bound in the preſence of his brethren, and conveyed to priſon; whilſt the reſt were diſmiſſed from the preſence of Joſeph, and began their journey towards Canaan. Not without much reflection upon the calamity to which they were reduced, and their cruelty to Joſeph as the procuring cauſe of all.

ARRIVED at the inn, how great was their ſurpriſe, when Iſſachar opening his ſack to give his aſs provender, found all the money he had given him for his corn returned in the mouth of it: aſtoniſhed at the event, he tells his brethren. Equally aſtoniſhed they fly every man to his ſack to examine, and lo! in the mouth of every man's ſack is found his money in full tail. In ſilent amazement they look at one another. Every one knows himſelf to have been clear; but no one man could be certain about his fellows. All alledged that the hand of their God was upon them for evil; but no one could ſo much as conjecture how their money ſhould come to be returned. Sleep departed from the eyes of the

patriarch that night, for they expected every moment to hear the voice of the purſuers, coming to carry them back to the governor. In ſhort, at laſt they conſidered the matter as a fraud put upon them, to find a pretext to enſlave them. And well knowing that their detention in Egypt would prove the deſtruction of the houſe of Jacob, they reſolved not to ſubmit tamely to their betrayers, but to periſh on the ſpot rather than be ſlaves to ſuch perfidy, and to ſell their lives as dear as poſſible. Now they lament the abſence of Simeon, the ſtrength of whoſe brawny arm they had heretofore amply proved. But all in vain their fears, and vain their deſperate purpoſes. For Joſeph had ſecretly commanded his chief factor to return all their money into their ſeveral ſacks, in the ſame order which it was found; ſo that when morning came, none appeared in purſuit of them.—They laded their cattle and proceeded on their journey, every now and then looking behind them to ſee if any danger appeared; and thus they proceeded from day to day, till they arrived at their own habitations.

THE good old patriarch looking out, ſaw them at a diſtance moving on heavily, becauſe of their loads of proviſion. And how did his aged heart beat thick with joy to ſee them ſafely returned with food for their families? but how ſoon did his joy abate, when he diſcovered that Simeon was miſſing?

They found themſelves under a neceſſity of declaring all that had paſt, between the Governor of Egypt and them in their abſence, and that Benjamin was demanded. Upon hearing of which the good man's heart failed him, and he could not forbear thus chiding them for their conduct. "Could not you, men of your years, never remarkable for ignorance, have gone and bought proviſion for us, without revealing the circumſtances of your family? What need was there for you to have mentioned that you had another brother at all? That could be nothing to a foreigner, nor would it have been at all enquired into, if you had not incautiouſly mentioned it. I cannot agree that Benjamin ſhould go. On your account I am bereaved of my Joſeph. You have no more mercy on my feeble age, than to take Benjamin away alſo. All theſe things are againſt me."

REUBEN, the elder born, approached and reſpectfully anſwered his father, "were we inſenſible of the grief and affliction of a parent ſo venerable, we ſhould debaſe ourſelves below brutality itſelf. Let not Iſrael charge us with want of tender regard, if we have thro' the neceſſity of circumſtances been induced to declare, what he could wiſh to have been concealed. For my own part, I am of opinion that the Governor's countenance muſt greatly belye his heart if any evil is to be apprehended at his hand. There is ſome-

thing ſo amiable and attractive in him, that I think I could without heſitation entruſt my life in his hand. And as a proof of my ſincerity, I offer, that, if my father will permit Benjamin to go along with his brethren as we have engaged, to leave my two ſons Hanoch and Phallu as pledges for his return; and if any harm befal him, let them be ſlain."

"Ah Reuben! replied the aged man, thou talkeſt in a ſimple ſtile. Should Benjamin be loſt, the death of my grand ſons would but make the wound deeper and more painful. Joſeph is already dead, Benjamin is all that is now left of Rachel, for whom I ſerved your grandfather fourteen years; and ſhould he go with you and evil befal him as it did Joſeph, this hoary head would come down with an inſupportable load of ſorrow to the grave. My ſon Benjamin ſhall not go down with you."

Aged Jacob ſoon perceiving that their late purchaſe was three fourths expended, apprized his ſons of the neceſſity of returning into Egypt to renew their ſtock of proviſions, to prevent the devaſtations which meagre famine would otherwiſe make in their dwellings. "Go, ſaid he, my ſons, return into Egypt and buy us a little more food for the houſhold." "We go Sir, replied Judah, if Benjamin go with us; But if he is not with us, we cannot go: for the lord-chancellor ſolemnly proteſted to us that unleſs we brought our youngeſt brother with

us, we ſhould not ſee his face; and that if we did bring him, we ſhould, under the ſhadow of his protection, have full liberty to traffic in any part of Egypt. Think, therefore, my father, what we are to do, for want will ſpeedily be here."

The holy man, with an heart wrung with ſorrow, replied, "Wherefore, Judah, dealt ye ſo ill with me, as to tell the lord of the land that you had another brother, for I underſtand that you was ſpeaker for your brethren?"

"Alas, Sir! the man was very ſtrict in examining of us concerning our ſtate, our kindred, the number of our father's children; and we told him the truth in every thing. Could we certainly know that he would demand our brother of us? And had we known that he would ſay bring your brother down to me; we durſt not have diſſembled and uttered falſhood, for then we ſhould have offended our God; and you yourſelf would have grieved for our tranſgreſſion. Allow me to ſay that my worthy father errs in his over careſulneſs for Benjamin. We are all your ſons as well as he; therefore equally intitled to your tender regard. But Simeon lies in chains, in a foreign land, pale famine ſtares you and all of us, our wives and little ones in the face. Nothing can ſave the life of Simeon, but our return into Egypt with our brother Benjamin; and nothing can ſave our tender families at home, but ſpeedy ſupplies from that country. Send

him with me my father. I will be ſurety for him of my hand do you require him. If you will ſend him, we will ariſe and go directly; but if not, we cannot go. We may as well ſtay at home and die by famine, with our wives and little ones, as be put to the ſword in a ſtrange land. Determine, therefore what we are to do, my father. For unleſs we had thus lingered, we might have been all ſafely returned the ſecond time.—And let Iſrael conſider that certain death awaits us all, if Benjamin is not permitted to go with us, and there is but a bare peradventure of danger to him if he goes. Remember, my father, the God of Bethel in whom thou haſt truſted, he is in Egypt as well as in Canaan. He is able to protect thy Benjamin in what land ſoever.

He ended here, and the penſive patriarch replied. "Well, Judah your reaſoning is home and concluſive. We will call the boy and enquire at his own mouth: if he is willing, I ſhall not further oppoſe his going; but if he is not willing, I will by no means conſtrain him. Are you willing, Benjamin, to accompany your brethren through the dangers of another journey to Egypt? They proteſt they will not go without you, and I am very unwilling to expoſe your young and tender years to the hardſhips and dangers of ſuch a journey. Be free my ſon, and ſpeak your mind?" Said Benjamin, "I ſhould ill deſerve

to call Jacob my father, if I ſhould ſo much as deſire to ſhun any dangers to which my brethren are expoſed. Far be it from me to delight in loitering at home, whilſt they by hardſhip and toil are caring for me and my little ones. I am not only perfectly willing to go with them, my father, but even deſirous of it; and would have propoſed it ere now, had it not been for fear of adding to your burden, my father; I want to ſee this lord-governor of Egypt. I know not how it is: but ever ſince my brother Reuben gave you an account of him, I have found my mind unaccountably attached to him. And laſt night I dreamed that I ſtood in his preſence along with my brethren, and I thought I ſaw ſomething ſo unſpeakably agreeably in him, that I could not but love him. But when he came to embrace me (for I thought he embraced me) I felt ſuch a glow of friendſhip warm my boſom, that I never experienced the like in my life. For my part I am of Reubens mind, I fear no harm from lord-governor."—"Well, my ſon, ſaid the hoary patriarch, with a deep groan, I muſt ſubmit. God grant that you be not miſtaken in the man."

"But, my ſons, take double money along with you, beſides that which was returned in your ſacks and repay it; perhaps it might be done undeſignedly by ſome of the overſeers of the ſtores. And go not empty handed to the man, ſeeing a gift in the boſom pacifieth

anger, but take with you an handſome preſent of the beſt produce of our land: ſuch as balm, honey, ſpices, myrrh, nuts and almonds. And, O God Almighty, go thou with my ſons, and give them favour in the ſight of the governor."

The ſons of Iſrael departed; the Lord appeared unto Jacob, in a viſion of the night, and ſaid unto him, "Jacob, what ſeeſt thou?" Jacob replied, "I ſee an almond tree, exceeding fair, ſmooth and ſtrong in the trunk, branched out into twelve capital boughs, each of which are ſubdivided into innumerable branches, and all laden with fruit of the moſt luxuriant growth." The viſion anſwered, "Thou haſt well ſeen, Jacob. Thou art the beautiful almond tree, from thee twelve branches are ſprung, which ſhall bring forth ſeed innumerable as the ſand of the ſea. Aſk not how it can be done, ſeeing one branch is lopped off from the native ſtem. Be ſatisfied in this, that what infinite wiſdom hath purpoſed, almighty power can accompliſh; leave thy Benjamin to the care of his God, for thou ſhalt embrace him in ſafety." So ſpake the viſion, and departing left a glow of ſeraphic fervour in the patriarch's heart, ſomething like that which he felt at Peniel, when like a prince, he prevailed with God.

THE

LIFE

OF

JOSEPH.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ARGUMENT.

The ſons of Iſrael arrive at Memphis with Benjamin—Judah apologizeth for the returned money—Offers the preſent Jacob had ſent—They are invited to dine with the governor—Their jealousy of ſome deſign againſt them—Simeon's opinion is asked—Their meeting with Joſeph—His ſtruggle with natural affection—They dine with him—His ſcheme to try their affection to Benjamin—They are purſued by the ſteward—Searched, and Benjamin is convicted of ſtealing Joſeph's cup—They all return to the palace—Judah confeſſeth their former guilt—Levi's lamentation for Benjamin—Benjamin ſtudieth to reconcile his brethren to his fate—Simeon and Levi reſolve to reſcue him or die with him—Joſeph makes himſelf known to his brethren—He comforts and encourages them—Invites them and all his father's houſe to come to live in Egypt—They regale themſelves with Joſeph and depart from Egypt.

BOOK VII.

ARRIVED in Egypt, they were conducted into the governor's preſence, who inwardly rejoiced to ſee the ſons of his father ſafely returned in company with Benjamin his brother.—"Well ſaid he, you have fulfilled the condition on your part, it behoves me to be equally faithful on mine; I ſhall give orders for your brother's immediate releaſe from priſon." When he ſaw them all together, he ordered his ſteward to kill a killing, and make plentiful proviſion; for ſaid he theſe men ſhall be my gueſts to-day. Having given neceſſary orders for his houſhold affairs, and having buſineſs to diſpatch abroad, he left his brethren alone until noon. Now Judah approached the ſteward, and thus apologized for the money that was returned in their ſacks.—"O my lord, we are under great difficulty at preſent, and have need of your friendſhip, as your influence with my lord the chancellor is great. When we came down at firſt, notwithſtanding your lord was jealous of us, we had indeed no other buſineſs in Egypt but to buy food for our families. The corn we purchaſed

and as we thought paid for, but to our great ſurpriſe and grief, when we opened our ſacks every man found his money in full weight in the mouth of his ſack. How it came there we cannot conceive. But willing to deal uprightly with all men, we have brought that money which was returned, again in our hand, beſides the money which we would now lay out for freſh proviſion. Will it pleaſe my lord to accept the returned money, and pardon what overſight ſoever might occaſion it? We have alſo brought a ſmall preſent, of the fruits of our land, for my lord the chancellor, which we beg you would preſent to him in our name."

"Your preſent for my lord, ſaid the ſteward, I willingly accept for him: but as for your money, I cannot receive it: as you paid the full value when you received your corn. As to the money ye found, in your ſacks, make yourſelves very eaſy about it: It is a gift of your God, from which no evil is likely to enſue. Set your hearts at reſt, and compoſe yourſelves, for I have orders from my lord to inform you, that he expects you all to dine with him at noon in his palace." As they did not much reliſh this invitation, they would gladly have excuſed themſelves from the honour deſigned, and with more peaceful thoughts have dined on an humble allowance in their inn; but as no excuſe could be admitted, they were obliged to ſubmit to the governor's pleaſure.

The ſteward withdrawn and they left alone, they began thus to reaſon one with another. One ſaid, "Simeon's releaſe looks well upon the governor's ſide, but I like not this invitation.—There is oftentimes the moſt malignant deſign carried on under the maſk of friendſhip. Now we have convinced him that we are no ſpies, ſaid another, I fear he is about deviſing ſome other plauſible pretence to detain us as ſlaves in the land. I muſt confeſs ſaid a third, that an invitation to ſuch as we, to dine with the ſecond perſon of the empire, looks very dubious. For my part, ſaid young Benjamin, I am under no apprehenſion of any ſuch thing; I ſee ſomething in my lord chancellor, that convinceth me that it is impoſſible for him to allow himſelf in unrighteouſneſs.—What is your opinion Simeon? You have had more acquaintance with the Egyptian manners than we have had."

"Really, my brother, ſaid Simeon, I know not what to think of the preſent invitation, any more than the reſt of you. To me it muſt ſeem ſomewhat myſterious, to be brought from a priſon to dine in a palace. Yet I aſſure you, I met with no ill-uſage here further than my confinement. I was bound you ſaw in your preſence, but as ſoon as you were departed, I was led away to an apartment agreeable in all reſpects, except that I was confined to it.—I was daily ſupplied with plenty of excellent food, but from whence it came, I

never was informed. The governor himself did me the honor of frequent visits, and conversed familiarly with me concerning the Hebrew lineage, (for he appears to be no stranger to Abraham, notwithstanding he is an Egyptian) concerning our father, and Benjamin, and especially concerning the death of Joseph; and I have observed, that when we have been conversing about these things, sometimes the tears would steal involuntarily from his eyes. I cannot say that I have any apprehension of evil, now you have fulfilled your engagements."

As they were thus reasoning among themselves, Joseph came home and ordered them into the hall of his palace. The steward at their request, presented the balm, myrrh, &c. which he received with visible satisfaction, to the great pleasure of his brethren. Then ordered them all to sit down, and enquired after their welfare.

"Have you been all well, my friends said he, since your departure hence? Did you find your good old father alive and well? Are your wives and children well?

Judah replied, "We got well home, and found thy servant our father in as good health as his advanced age would permit, likewise our wives and children we found well. But we have cause to fear for our father at our return, for it cut him to the heart to part with his youngest son."

"And this is your younger brother of whom ye ſpake! ſaid he, God be gracious to thee my ſon. I hope thy father will have no cauſe to be ſorrowful for ſending thee hither."

He ſaid, but his ſwollen heart could bear no more. He knew not how to keep from his brother's embrace. Therefore he haſted from the hall, before his brethren ſhould perceive his diſorder, and ſought a private apartment, where he might give vent to the overflowings of his heart. But that he would prove them whether they retained the ſame malignant diſpoſition towards him, he would have ruſhed to their embrace and bedewed them with fraternal tears. But, as before, his wiſdom ſuperſeded his paſſion, and he concealed his affection for them till he could be ſatisfied of their temper towards Benjamin.

Having eaſed his almoſt burſted boſom, by the briny flood he ſhed, he waſhed off the tears from his face, went into dinner with the ſons of his father, who all ſat at table with him according to ſeniority, from Reuben down to Benjamin. Thus ſeated, Joſeph ſent meſſes from before him unto them all, beginning at Benjamin and leaving off at Levi, of whoſe repentance he had no particular proof. But little Benjamin's meſs was a five fold portion, deſigned to inform him that he had found a friend in the governor of Egypt. So they

eat and drank till they were merry in his preſence.

But Joſeph, in order to prove their regard to his brother Benjamin, contrived to have him arreſted as an offender, to ſee what an effect it would have upon them. Accordingly he commanded his ſteward, ſaying, "I have not yet done with theſe men, I muſt get you to aſſiſt me in a ſcheme which I have deviſed to put them to a more cloſe trial than before. Go fill their ſacks with corn, and put every man's money in the mouth of his ſack, and take this ſilver cup of mine, and put it into that of the youngeſt, along with his corn money. But do it yourſelf, let none be privy to it but you and I."

They had not been long departed, before the ſteward was commanded to take a troop of light horſe and purſue them, charge them with the theft, and bring them back unto the governor.—Great was their ſurpriſe when they looked behind them and ſaw a company of armed men cloſely purſuing them. They ſtopped their cattle and ſtood ſtill to enquire the cauſe. "Is this, ſaid the ſteward, the manner in which ye foreigners requite the kindneſs of my lord? Could you not partake of his hoſpitality, without ſtealing away his plate. You are poſſeſſed of my lord's cup, the ſilver cup out of which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth. This is baſely

done to requite his goodneſs to you with ſuch evil."

"I am amazed, ſaid Judah, to hear ſuch a charge from the mouth of my lord. God forbid that any of the ſons of Iſrael ſhould be guilty of ſuch baſeneſs. Conſider, Sir, how unlikely it is that we ſhould be guilty of ſtealing your lord's cup. When our money was returned in our ſacks unknown to us, we brought it back from the land of Canaan. Had we been diſhoneſtly inclined, why kept we it not to ourſelves? How then ſhould we go to ſteal from thy maſter either ſilver or gold? But you are welcome to ſearch and ſatisfy yourſelf. And if it be found with us, he with whom it is found ſhall die, and the reſt of us will be content to become bondmen to your maſter."

"Be it ſo, replied the ſteward, he with whom the cup is found ſhall be detained a bondman to my maſter, but all the reſt may proceed on their journey. They haſted and unladed their cattle, and the ſteward began to ſearch beginning at the ſacks of the eldeſt till he came to Benjamin's ſack, out of which to their utter confuſion he took his maſters ſilver cup, in the preſence of them all, held it up, and ſaid, "Are you now wrongfully charged?" In utter deſpair they rent their clothes, laded their cattle and returned to the city, for they would not go forward without their brother Benjamin.

Joſeph was ſtill in the hall waiting their return, and had collected all the ſternneſs he was maſter of, into his countenance. "What is this, ſaid he that you have done: Did you ſuppoſe that I could not find out your treachery? Is it right in you thus to requite kindneſs?"

They all fell proſtrate before him, with humble ſubmiſſion thus addreſſed him: "Alas! my lord, it will be in vain for us to proteſt our innocence, ſeeing the cup was found in our poſſeſſion. Though the God of governors will not charge us with putting it there. It is not for this, but old iniquity, for which thy ſervants ſuffer. It is not thy hand, but that of our God that is upon us. We confeſs his judgments to be juſt. We ſubmit to his ſentence, and yield ourſelves bondmen in a ſtrange land. Take us, my lord, and diſpoſe of us as you pleaſe. Farewell aged and honourable Iſrael, may Abraham's God be thy divine ſupport, for thou ſeeſt thy ſons no more forever. Joſeph is not, Benjamin is convicted of felony, and all thy ſons are determined not to ſurvive his fate. He ſhall not bear the guilt of his brethren alone. Farewell, beloved wives and tender prattling infants, no more you fly to the glowing embraces of your huſbands and parents! Injured Joſeph! never did the blood of Abel cry louder for vengeance, than thine doth! Er and Onan are both already fallen victims to

avenge thee.—And now all the race of Jacob are required. Innocent Benjamin, why ſhould he ſuffer with his guilty brethren?" So ſaying, his voice was ſtopped by his riſing ſorrow, and he poured forth a flood of repentant and grieſful tears; and then proceeded: "Keep us not in ſuſpenſe, my lord. Let us know our doom, for we are prepared to meet the worſt."

"God forbid that I ſhould do injuſtice to you, ſaid Joſeph, in either putting you to death, or keeping you all for bondmen. Only he with whom the cup was found ſhall be liable to puniſhment. And as for the reſt of you, go ye home to your father in peace: and come and traffic in the land, whenever you have occaſion. There is a law of certain and punctual equity, which ought to be obſerved by all in power; and that is on the one hand, not to let the offender paſs with impunity; nor on the other, to puniſh the innocent however nearly allied to the guilty. I fear God. His law is my rule, it warrants me to puniſh delinquency wherever it is found; but forbids me at all to oppreſs the innocent. You ten are therefore at liberty to go where you will, my buſineſs is alone with the offender."

"Alas! my brother Benjamin, ſaid Levi; is all your prepoſſeſſion in favour of the governor come to this? How was thy ſimple and

honeſt heart beguiled? O my brother, how deluſive was thy dream that made, as thou thought, the governor's friendly embrace thrill with a warming glow throughout thy whole boſom? Oh my brother, my brother! I ſhall never return to Canaan without thee."

Judah came forward, and thus implored the chancellor's mercy. "Alas! my lord; ſpare the young man, our brother, from bonds, impriſonment, and death. But for the guilt of his brethren, his birth might ſeem to have promiſed better proſpects. Much might be urged in our brother's defence. He is young, inexperienced, and has ſeen but little of the world. His conduct has hitherto been unimpeached; and merciful governors do not uſually puniſh with ſeverity the firſt fault of any delinquent. It might be urged that the lad was not preſent when the ſacks were filled; and there is at leaſt a poſſibility of the cup being conveyed into his ſack without his knowledge. Nevertheleſs, as appearances are ſtrong againſt him, we ſtand not to juſtify ourſelves but rely upon the clemency of my lord governor. Although the guilt may be charged but upon one, the puniſhment muſt of neceſſity fall upon the whole; for our fate is involved in his. Allow me to ſay it, for I now ſpeak for life or death, that mercy is the brighteſt perfection of Deity, and muſt therefore be the glory of princes and governors: anger and reſentment being paſſions fitted on-

ly for ſlaves and narrow contracted ſelfiſh ſpirits. We have here delivered up ourſelves to your lordſhip, and think it would not be for the honor of Egypt, for its governor to deſtroy a number of men, who are willing to become indebted for their lives to his mercy and ſavour. You have already relieved us when we otherwiſe muſt have periſhed for want? be pleaſed to exerciſe the ſame clemency in beſtowing a free pardon upon theſe that are willing to be accounted guilty. What if the God of our fathers whoſe wiſdom is unſearchable, and whoſe judgments are a great deep, ſhould have ſuffered your ſervants to fall into theſe diſtreſſing circumſtances, on purpoſe to furniſh my lord with further opportunity of exerciſing his virtue. It will indeed ſhew a noble diſpoſition in my lord governor, to delight in conferring life and mercy, rather than in taking ſtrict vengeance for injuries ſuſtained by himſelf.

"Let my lord aſſure himſelf, that it is not for our own life and ſafety that we are thus ſolicitous. No, life has loſt its principal charms, ſince ſuch a reproach is brought upon the houſe of Iſrael. But it is a tenderneſs for a good old father, already bowed down with a ſeries of adverſe providences. And the loſs of his children will bring down his honorable grey hairs with ſorrow to the grave. I know well what I ſay my lord. I have felt the wringings of parental anguiſh on the ſud-

den loſs of my own children. I have ſeen the inſupportable ſorrow of my father's ſpirit upon the loſs of his Joſeph. And ſhould he be bereaved of Benjamin, in whom his very life is wrapt up, it is eaſy to ſee what will follow. Perhaps my lord has an aged father alive. Suppoſe him, my lord, in the place of our father, and let his hoary hairs be an advocate for an unhappy youth, whoſe life is in your hand. You have ſons, my lord. From your paternal tenderneſs to them, conceive what our father muſt feel upon the loſs of his children. There is ſomething ſacred in the name of father, therefore the moſt high hath choſen it, as one of the endearing names whereby he reveals himſelf to his people, and whereby he chooſeth to be addreſſed by them. God your heavenly father, will certainly requite all the kindneſs which you ſhall ſhew to this young man, and unto us in him. I pray my lord, by all that is tender and endearing in the bonds of nature: by all that is amiable in a member of ſociety, and by the endearing obligations we are all under to the Father of Mercies, that you will ſpare the boy to be a comfort to his aged parent."

"I became bound to reſtore him to his father again, and ſhall not return without him. If he is to die, I offer my ſelf in his ſtead. Or if the ſentence is ſlavery, it is the ſame. Death and ſlavery, are alike to me. In ſaying this I ſpeak but the ſentiments of all my

brethren, for they are all determined to ſtand or fall with Benjamin."

So ſaying he caſt himſelf at the governor's feet, and all the reſt after him in joint meditation for their unhappy brother. All ſeemingly to no purpoſe.

Benjamin with an amiable ſerenity, and with a glow of brotherly affection, ſaid, "My brethren, if the governor's heart is a ſtranger to pity, I fear not what he can inflict. It is but to die and he himſelf cannot eſcape it. But live ye my brethren, for Iſrael's ſake accept the life that is offered to you.—It will be ſome ſatisfaction for our good farther to hear that his Benjamin is innocent of the crime for which he ſuffers. Let me repeat my requeſt, my brethen, for I fear not death,"

With the greateſt difficulty, Joſeph ſuppreſſed the guſt of tender affection ready to burſt forth ſo far as to be able with ſome degree of auſterity, to command the guard to ſecure the priſoner.

Simeon and Levi ſprung from their places, drew their well tried ſwords, ruſhed between the guards and their brother, and with all the vehemence of paſſion, cried out, "If Benjamin dies, he dies neither alone nor unrevenged. Theſe ſwords have been bathed in the blood of hundreds, and hundreds, yet ſhall periſh ere Benjamin dies an unmerited death. The children of Ham, ſhed not Hebrew blood.

at free coſt. If we muſt die, let us ſell our lives as dear as poſſible."

"Stay your hands upon both ſides, cried Joſeph, it is enough; let all depart the hall except the eleven brethren ſaid he, and all departed. Left alone with his brethren Joſeph ſaid, I have tried and proved your virtue, my brethren and rejoice to ſee it. I am Joſeph, your own brother Joſeph." He ſaid, and burſt into tears as he fell upon Benjamin's boſom, and wept aloud, that even the Egyptians heard him.—His brethren ſtood in the utmoſt amazement, and confuſion glowed upon every countenance. The ſight of their injured brother realized all the horrors of their guilt. They durſt not approach him, however much they rejoiced at ſeeing him alive.

He went to them one by one, and embraced them with ardent affection, and in particular he aſſured Simeon and Levi that their generous valor in defence of his brother Benjamin, had effectually obliterated the laſt remains of his reſentment, of their former conduct towards him.

When paſſion had ſubſided on both ſides, and cooler reaſon had reſumed her government, all being ſeated in the hall of the palace, Joſeph thus harangued them.

"My dear brethren, it is impoſſible for me to deſcribe the pleaſure you have this day given me, by your firm and zealous attachment to Benjamin your brother and mine. It

was not without ſome ground, as you know, that I had ſuſpicion of your regard to the deſcendants of my mother Rachel. To be ſatisfied in this, I deviſed the ſcheme by which your virtue has ſo eminently diſcovered itſelf. Reuben, you deſerve my warmeſt acknowledgement for the ſervice you intended me at Dothan; but it had been worſe for us all today, if your well-meant ſcheme had ſucceeded. Whilſt I was in the pit, I had a viſion of an heavenly meſſenger that informed me of the mind and will of God concerning me, and perfectly reconciled me to my fate. Methinks the countenances of Simeon and Levi, are not free from cloudy apprehenſions. O my brethren, diſmiſs your fears. I ſhould be worſe than an infidel, if your generous attachment to Benjamin did not wholly rivet you in my eſteem.—Yes, my brethren, I will ever confide in the noble reſolution of Simeon and Levi. I have ſeen ſo much of the hand of my God in my perſonal affairs, that I have really loſt ſight of ſecond cauſes; or I love them with the greater tenderneſs, knowing that there muſt be poignant remorſe following after evil meanings. Your meaning was then evil I acknowledge, but the deſign of God was good. And I ſhould be exceeding culpable before God, if I did not heartily approve of the means by which he has exalted me.

I aſſure you, my brethren, that all paſt in-

juries are with me, as if they had never been, and I rejoice to see the spirit of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob diffuse itself throughout all his seed.—Here in this cup of cordial friendship, let us drink an eternal oblivion of past injuries. And now by brethren, you see what God hath done, but perhaps as yet you know not the cause of it.—I am here advanced to power and dignity in Egypt: not for my own sake, but for yours, and that of my father's house, to preserve much people alive. Two years of the famine are already past. Last year the Nile did not arise to its usual height, by eight cubits; and this present year, not by twelve cubits. Five years are yet to come, in which there shall be neither earing nor harvest. As this is the case, it may reconcile you to what cannot be recalled, or remedied; and you may see that God overruled your little predjudices for Israel's good. After you have regaled yourselves with me a day or two, I would have you return to Jacob my father, and tell him of all things that God hath done for me in the land of Egypt. How that he hath made me as a father to Pharaoh, and lord over all the land. Tell him that I invite the whole house of Israel down to Egypt to sojourn till the famine is over and gone. And lo, I send light carriages by you to carry my father, your wives and little ones, and bring them down to me."

By this time it was known in Joseph's pal-

ace, that his brethren were come; it got wind in the ſtreets, and flew like lightning from one ſtreet to another, till it had ſpread itſelf all over the metropolis. The inhabitants in general, were in a rapture of joy, and to teſtify their regard to the lord-highchancellor, there were bonfires made in every opening, bells ringing, waterworks playing, and every other demonſtration of joy that thoſe ancient times admitted of. And even Pharaoh himſelf rejoiced, to hear of the brethren of his favourite being arrived in Memphis.

Now Joſeph commanded Manaſſeh and Ephraim to be brought before him, and preſented them to their eleven uncles; and the fair Aſenath, greatly rejoiced in having found ſuch a number of heroic brethren. Pharaoh commanded Joſeph to ſend ſuitable proviſions and carriages for Jacob and his children, and from the monarch himſelf to invite him to come to Egypt, and aſſure him of protection and proviſion all the time the famine ſhould laſt. This the conſiderate monarch did, to prevent any envious mind from reflecting on Joſeph, for any kindneſs ſhewn to the houſehold of Iſrael.

Having regaled themſelves two days with Joſeph, and ſeen every thing curious and valuable in the metropolis, he ſent them away, after he had given them friendly advice.

After ſupper, the evening before they be-

ſore they began their journey, Joſeph thus addreſſed them, "My dear brethren, you are now going to viſit the beſt and moſt honourable of fathers, to carry him the unexpected news of having found his ſon, who has been ſo long loſt. You will be prudent enough I hope, to take care how you divulge the matter to him; leſt the news of my life ſhould prove as fatal to him, as the former news of my death had like to have done. Let it be done with caution, and by little and little. In all probability you will find yourſelves under a neceſſity of diſcloſing the whole of the former plot againſt me, in order to account for my being yet alive.—But, my brethren, beware of reflecting upon each other's conduct: remember that the hand of God was in it. I ſympathize with you, my brother Judah, under the heavy loſs of my youthful nephews. But I foreſee that Judah ſhall yet be great in the houſe of his father, and they ſhall deſcend from Judah, who are deſtined to rule. Let all thoughts of paſt things be forever baniſhed from your minds, and cultivate amongſt yourſelves the ſtricteſt amity and friendſhip. Whilſt you ſtand by one another, as you all nobly did the other day, by my brother Benjamin, no power on earth ſhall overcome you; but if ye ſhould diſagree among yourſelves, ye would become an eaſy prey to every enemy."

"Ye depart to-morrow. But let me not

ſend you empty away. You will be pleaſed to accept of this, as a ſmall token of my regard to the children of my father." So ſaying, he preſented each of them with a goodly ſum of money and changes of raiment, but Benjamin's preſent was three times as valuable as any of the reſt: he likewiſe ſent ten beaſts of burden, laden with the beſt things of Egypt, as a preſent to his honorable father; and other ten laden with healthful and delicate proviſion for them all by the way.—Then he bleſſed them, took his leave of them, and retired to communicate the whole adventure to Aſenath, his beloved conſort.

1 NO 61

THE

LIFE

OF

JOSEPH.

ARGUMENT.

The ſons of Jacob arrive at Canaan—He enquires after all that befel them in their abſence—Judah relates the governor's kindneſs—Jacob expreſſeth his thankfulneſs on their account—Excuſeth his backwardneſs to ſend Benjamin with them—Simeon confeſſeth their former treachery to Joſeph—Judah informs the patriarch of his being alive—Benjamin confirms his report—Jacob faints, but is recovered by the ſight of the waggons—Jacob heſitates about accepting Joſeph's invitation—He is encouraged by a viſion—They ſet out for Egypt—He meets with Joſeph at Hieropolis—Their exceeding joy and endearing careſſes—Joſeph preſents five of his brethren to the king—They are ſent to Goſhen—Jacob takes up his lodging in Joſeph's palace for a time—preſented to the king—Relates Abraham's victory over the four kings—The famine ended—Joſeph reſtores the Egyptians to their eſtates—Sabrina on her death-bed requeſts a viſit from Joſeph, that ſhe might implore his forgiveneſs—He meets unexpectedly with Alvah in diſtreſs, requites his former kindneſs to himſelf.

BOOK VIII.

THE venerable patriarch, impatient for his ſons return, and ſolicitous for Benjamin's welfare, ſtood upon an eminence, near his rural dwelling, with his ſanguine eye intently fixed upon the way of Egypt. When he beheld his ſons afar off, and as faſt as feeble age would admit, he haſted to embrace them. Have my ſons ſaid he in his heart, found favour with the governor of Egypt, that they are ſafely and timely arrived. Bleſſed be the God of my fathers, who ſo graciouſly has returned you all my ſons to my longing embrace. And bleſſed be the man, the lord of the land, who dealt friendly with tender Benjamin. Thus the good old man vented the gratitude of his heart, whilſt his ſons drew near and unladed their cattle. Very prudently had they left the carriages behind at a diſtance, under proper conductors, that their father's ſurpriſe might be the leſs, until they had gently inſinuated the rapturous news into his aged ear. Every thing arrived, cattle, ſervants, and ſtores diſpoſed of properly, till a fit opportunity, the ſons preſented the-

ſelves before their venerable parent, to join him in offering up an evening oblation to that God, who had led them forth in peace, and brought them home in ſafety; for in the days of yore, the pious race delighted to acknowledge God for every benefit. The ſolemn ſervice devoutly attended to, whilſt gratitude and humble adorations aſcended with the ſmoke of the incenſe, the patriach aſſembled all his family, ſons, daughters and grandchildren, and with an exceſs of parental fondneſs embraced them all again, and enquired after what had befallen them ſince their departure for Egypt." Come Judah, ſaid he, you became ſurety for your brother Benjamin; tell me my ſon, by what means you have been enabled to fulfil your engagement?"

"My father, replied Judah, it is with pleaſure I can inform you, that we had a ſafe and pleaſant journey down to Egypt, and as ſoon as we arrived there we were conducted to the preſence of the governor, whom we found to be a ſenſible and humane perſon, capable of feeling the diſtreſſes of his fellow creatures. As ſoon as he had by proper enquiry found that we had fulfilled our agreement with him, he forth-with ordered our brother Simeon to be releaſed and delivered unto us. He aſked with a great deal of affection after our welfare in our abſence; in particular for our aged father, our wives and tender offspring, in ſhort

he ſeemed to intereſt himſelf in our concerns, as much as if he had been our brother. You cannot think, my father, with what delight he gazed upon, and with what affection he embraced our brother Benjamin. He not only returned our money for our corn, but has been pleaſed to beſtow a ſum and a ſuit of apparel upon each of us, and unto Benjamin he hath given three hundred pieces of ſilver, and five ſuits of rich apparel. Beſides a very rich and valuable preſent which he has ſent for you, my father, and which ſhall be laid before you to-morrow morning."

"Bleſſed be the Lord God, ſaid Jacob, who gave you ſuch favour in the ſight of the man. And O may all his kindneſs to you, my ſons, and to your father's houſe, be returned tenfold unto him, by the mighty God of Jacob. How cauſeleſs were my fears for you my Benjamin! How did my heart tremble to think that peradventure evil might befal you? and I concluded, my ſon, that I could not ſurvive the loſs of you. But you know, my ſons, that my loſs of Joſeph might reaſonably make me more fearful than otherwiſe I might have been. I loved him for his mothers ſake, I ſaw abundance of excellencies in his opening genius, and I thought I could ſee a ſpirit of propheſy in the dreams he related to us. Yet after all theſe things, Joſeph was torn to pieces."

"No, my father, replied Simeon, Joſeph was not torn to pieces. It ſhall be my part

now, to reveal a myſtery of iniquity, which venerable Iſrael never could ſuſpect his ſons to have been guilty of. His dreams my father, fired the hearts of his brethren with jealouſy; and foreſeeing that if he lived in Canaan, we ſhould become ſubject to him, we conſpired againſt him to ſlay him. This was indeed our firſt purpoſe, for I have now ſuch a ſenſe of the evil of our proceedings that I will not attempt to extenuate them. Reuben alone oppoſed the horrid deed, and thereby expoſed himſelf to danger. Our purpoſe however was over-ruled, and inſtead of putting him to death, we ſold him to Midianitiſh merchants. The coat dipt in blood was a contrivance of ours, to hide ourſelves from a ſuſpicion of guilt. Oh! Sir, accuſe not your ſons, for it has coſt us dear. Our guilt has produced the keeneſt remorſe, and we cannot bear the frowns of an injured father." "But Joſeph is not, Simeon, ſaid the patriarch, I am bereaved of my Joſeph; and what reſtitution can you make? though not torn in pieces as I ſuppoſed, he may be enſlaved in ſome foreign country, where I ſhall never embrace him." "No, Sir, replied Judah, he is not enſlaved; we have ſeen him, we have embraced him and have converſed with him. He it is that is lord over all the Egyptian monarchy." "Oh! what do you tell me?" replied the patriarch, and ſunk down in his chair. A little come to himſelf, ſaid he, "Does Joſeph live? Can it be

possible? If he lives, O that these withered arms could grasp him." "Yes, my father, returned Benjamin, he lives. Joseph my brother, lives! I embraced him. He wept upon my neck, and I on his; and he sends you an invitation by me, to come and sojourn with him in Egypt till the famine is gone; which he assures us will be five times twelve months."

"O Benjamin, what do you say? Are you assured that you now speak the truth? I saw his many coloured coat, torn in pieces and smeared with his blood. How then can he yet live?" "Remember my father, said Benjamin, what Simeon has just now declared, that they killed a young goat and dipt the coat in the blood thereof, rent it, and delivered it to you, my father. So that Joseph lives, and is lord-governor of all the kingdom of Egypt. He hath besides sent waggons and other light carriages, my father, to convey you and yours down into the land of Egypt; for he tells us, that there are yet five years more of famine to come, in which there shall be neither earing nor reaping."

"That he lives I am thankful for, replied the patriarch; as to his grandeur it affects me not. But Joseph lives. That is enough. I will spend the small remains of life in taking a journey to embrace my son before I die. My Joseph, how have I wept over thy death my son! But O, my God, let me but embrace him, and I shall soon forget all the sor-

row ſuſtained upon his account. Yes, Joſeph, I come to ſee thee my ſon. Iſrael comes to bow himſelf down upon the neck of him who was ſeparated from his brethren. Make ready, my ſons, for our ſpeedy departure. The lamp of nature is already, with me, reeling in the ſocket. What I do muſt be quickly done, leſt death prevents me.

"But O my ſons, for your ſakes, and the ſake of my grand-children, I dread to embrace my Joſeph's invitation."—"What objections, Sir, can you have to it? There is plenty in all the land of Egypt. There is corn, wine and oil, treaſured up by Joſeph's provident care," ſaid Reuben. "It is that very plenty I dread my ſon. And that I fear may be as injurious to your morals, as the famine might have been to your families. What if the abundance of corn and fleſh reported to be there, ſhould incline my ſeed to ſettle in that ſtrange land, and do what they can to fruſtrate the Lord's deſign of putting you and your children in the land of Canaan. I fear for you, my children. Ye are young, and can reliſh the pleaſures of ſenſe.—Was I to go alone and viſit my ſon, the danger might be leſs; as I am old, and the pleaſure of enjoyment is departed from me." Jacob however could not reſiſt the importunity of his ſons, eſpecially Benjamin, who pleaded hard that he might go and ſpend his days near his brother Joſeph. "Well my children I go, ſaid he,

but I adjure you by the greateſt of names, that ye entertain no thoughts of ſettling in Egypt, nor of mixing yourſelves with the children of Ham."

So early next morning he aroſe, he and his ſons, and his ſons wives and children, and departed from the neighbood of Shalem, having firſt offered a morning ſacrifice upon the altar El-elohe Iſrael, and that day reached the well of the oath, where he pitched his tent, and reſted that night in the grove which Abraham planted, and where he was accuſtomed to offer up his devotions, morning and evening, to the Lord his God. Here alſo the journeying patriarch with his family offered ſacrifices unto, and and invoked the unutterable name of Jacob's God. And lo! in the ſecond watch of the the night, the tent of Iſrael was irradiated with celeſtial brightneſs, far ſurpaſſing the ſun in his ſtrength, and a voice not foreign to Jacob's ear, was heard to cry aloud, "Jacob, Jacob." The raptured parent of the choſen race, replied, "Here am I. Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth.

The voice replied, "Fear not Jacob, for I am thy God, the God of thy fathers Abraham and Iſaac. I have ſeen all thy ſolicitude for thy children's welfare, and, approve thy pious regard for the promiſe of thy God. But know, O Jacob, that it was thy God who ſeparate Joſeph from thine embrace, to make

him a nurſing father to the houſe of Iſrael. I have given him glory, wealth and power in the land of Egypt for thy ſake, Jacob; that by his means, I may ſave the people of my covenant. Fear not therefore to carry thy ſeed down unto that land of plenty. Even there ſhalt thou meet thy God, O Iſrael, for I will go down with thee, and for thy ſake will viſit Egypt. There will I greatly multiply thy ſeed, and fulfil all that I ſpake unto Abraham concerning them. When I have made of thee a great nation, I will bring thy ſeed forth with wonders and ſigns in the heavens above, and in the earth below: yea, with a mighty and ſtretched out arm will I ſave thy ſeed, Jacob. As for thee, thou ſhalt die in a good old age in a ſtrange land, and thy exiled ſon ſhall bedew thy bed with tears of filial ſorrow, and cloſe thine eyes in death. Accept, therefore of Joſeph's invitation and go into Egypt, confident of the preſence and protection of the God of thy fathers." Thus ſaid, the viſion departed. In the morning Jacob aroſe, took his ſons and daughters and their little ones, their cattle and all the goods which they had procured in the land of Canaan, and journied towards Egypt. Greatly invigorated by the late viſion, the patriarch proceeded cheerfully on his journey, till got about half way between Shechem and Memphis, when he diſpatched Judah and Napthali to court to inform Joſeph of his father's ap-

proach: and he on his part, immediately ſet out with a numerous train of obedient ſervants to meet him, and the better to expedite the journey of the Hebrew caravan. They met at the city Hieropolis, where Joſeph was well known and regarded, as the faviour of Egypt. Both father and ſon had endeavoured upon their journey to fortify their hearts for the expected interview. Yet do what they would, they could not reſtrain nature from breaking through all the injunctions of reaſon.—Joſeph with lowly reverence advanced, fell down at his father's feet, and would have aſked his bleſſing; but as his ſoul had not power to give action to his lips, Jacob would have raiſed up his ſon, but being overcome with rapturous joy, he ſunk down beſide him with his head upon Joſeph's, and thus for a ſeaſon father and ſon both continued ſpeechleſs, to the great fear and ſurpriſe of all the kindred company, leſt ſuch a tide of joy, burſting in upon their hearts, ſhould throw the wheels of nature off from the axis, and prove fatal to their deſirable lives. At length each labouring heart vented itſelf in a flood of tears, which the father ſhed upon the ſon, and the ſon upon the father. When the uſe of ſpeech was regained, nothing was to be heard, but O my ſon! O my father! my ſon, my father, till the tide of compaſſion began to abate. Then both hearts were lifted up with grateful acknowledgments

of the goodneſs of God's holy providence, that had bleſt them with a once unexpected interview. Looſed from his father's embrace, he flies to the arms of his brothers' wives, and O what endearing careſſes were there betwixt him and them. O my Joſeph! my Shuah! my Joſeph! my Tamar! my Joſeph! my Zillah, &c. &c. was all the cry. And thus they would have gone on in exchanging endearing careſſes till the ſun had gone down, if Judah had not put them in mind of the expediency of proceeding on their journey.

It was agreed that Jacob and his company ſhould come on by eaſy marches, as their ſtrength and the nature of their charge would beſt admit of; and that Joſeph and ſome of his brethren ſhould go forward to Memphis, and inform his majeſty of the patriarch's arrival. Accordingly he choſe five of his brethren and departed, and as ſoon as arrived, he preſented them to the king, who rejoiced exceedingly at their arrival. If Egypt ſaid he, has been ſuch a gainer by having only one of the Hebrew lineage, what vaſt advantages muſt accrue to the land by having all the family of Iſrael in its poſſeſſion. "What is your ſeveral occupations, my friends?" ſaid his majeſty. Joſeph replied for his brethren, "May it pleaſe your majeſty, my brethren are all ſhepherds. From their youth up, their whole buſineſs has been about cattle." Joſeph choſe to anſwer for them, partly, that by his anſwer he

might pave a way for their dwelling in Goſhen, altogether with their father, ſeparated from the Egyptians, and partly to prevent Pharaoh from conferring upon them honors of ſtate, or employing them in matters of government to the diſſatisfaction of the Egyptians.

"Then Joſeph ſaid the king, if your brethren are ſhepherds, I would have you fix them in a place where they are moſt likely to find paſtures for their flocks. What think you of Goſhen, Joſeph?" "Above all places, if it is your majeſty's pleaſure, I would chuſe Goſhen for their reſidence." "Very well, ſaid the king, let them dwell in Goſhen. And you ſhall have letters under my ſign manuel, as your authority for ſo doing."

When Jacob and his family arrived at Memphis, they were ſent to Goſhen, where the good old prince Potipherah waited their arrival, and had provided ſuitable accommodation for them, in the city of Heliopolis. Jacob went into Joſeph's palace, was moſt affectionately received by the princeſs Aſenath, who humbly begged the patriarchal bleſſing on her knees. Manaſſah and Ephraim likewiſe came and careſſed their venerable grandfather, who preſſed them to his glowing boſom.

Refection received after ſo long a journey, and balmy reſt had a little reanimated his feeble frame, Joſeph took his venerable father and preſented him to the king, who was ſtruck

with ſolemn awe at the majeſty of the patriarch's perſon. He continued ſpeechleſs for a time, till Jacob himſelf broke ſilence in the following ſpeech. "Bleſſed be the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that has raiſed up Pharaoh to be at this day a nurſing father to many nations.—And bleſſed be Pharaoh of the Lord my God, who has ſhewed regard to my baniſhed Joſeph, and unto the ſeed of Iſrael for Joſeph's ſake. May thy reign be long and proſperous, and heaven inſpired peace be the poſſeſſor of thy royal breaſt. And may that God by whom thou now reigneſt, beſtow upon thee a crown of righteouſneſs in the eternal ſkies, when thou art called to leave this uncertain diadem to thy next ſucceſſor." "For Joſeph's ſake, replied the king, I embrace his father, and bid him welcome to the court of Memphis. But I pray thee, reverend old man, may I be ſo free as to aſk thine age? I remember not that my eyes were ever ſtruck with ſuch a venerable form."

The patriarch replied. "But few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage; I am now in the hundred and thirtieth year of my age; but the many ſorrows interwoven in my lot, the croſs providences under which I have grieved, have drawn old age upon me before the time."

"The aſtoniſhed monarch replied, "What! do you not account an hundred and thirty

years an old age? We ſhould think it a very extraordinary thing to ſee a perſon live ſo long in Egypt."

"O king anſwered Jacob, to ſome it may appear an old age, but unto me, whoſe anceſtors, father and grandfather, lived beyond an hundred and ſeventy years, it appears otherwiſe. Abraham, my grandfather, lived to the age of an hundred and ſeventy five; and Iſaac, my own father, to an hundred and eighty-five; ſo that I have not attained to the lives of my fathers.

"Abraham! ſaid the king with ſome ſurprize; we have a tradition concerning one Abraham, a private man, who overthrew the united ſtrengh of ſeveral kings. Are you a deſcendant of his? If ſo, I ſhould be glad to have an account of the truth of this affair. As I have always conſidered it as almoſt paſt belief, I have given little credit to it."

"It is no fiction, my lord, returned the patriarch, the caſe was this. In the days of Amraphel, king of Aſſyria he with other princes in alliance with him, made war with Bera, king of Sodom and the princes in alliance with him; four kings joined their forces together and met the five Kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. in the vale of Sidim, where they routed the army of the Sodomites, and made ſuch a ſlaughter amongſt them, that they, finding themſelves unable to make head againſt the enemy, were obliged to ſue for peace;

which could not be obtained but upon condition of becoming tributary to the conquerors. This they were obliged to ſubmit to, however reluctant.—Twelve years they paid the ſtipulated ſum, and in the thirteenth year, ſuppoſing themſelves in a condition to reſiſt, they refuſed to pay it any longer. Wherefore the confederated Aſſyrians, came again under arms and ravaged all the countries in friendſhip with Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. The Rephaims, Zuzims, Emims, Horites, Amalekites and Amorites, felt the ſeverity of their rage. At laſt the kings of Sodom having levied a numerous army went forth againſt them, and joined battle in the valley of Brimſtone-pits. But as before the effeminate inhabitants of Sodom, &c. could not ſtand before the warlike Aſſyrians.—Many of them fell in the action, and the reſt were totally routed. Sodom plundered and ſacked, and Lot, Abraham's nephew, was carried away captive. As ſoon as my grandfather heard of his kinſman's captivity, reſolving upon his redemption, he armed three hundred and eighteen valiant young men, born in his own houſe, and purſued them unto Dan, where he found them in a careleſs and ſecure manner, rioting upon the ſpoils of their late conqueſt. Sable night enveloping the land in darkneſs, greatly favoured his deſign; he divided his little army into three companies, two of which were ordered to fetch a compaſs round and attack the camp at differ-

ent places, whilſt Abraham attacked it on the ſide next unto him. No ſooner had conſternation ſpread itſelf among the Aſſyrians, than Lot heard and knew the voice of the Hebrews.—They ſet all the priſoners at liberty, and clothed them with the armour of the ſlaughtered Aſſyrians. When joining with Abraham's Hebrews, they dealt deſtruction throughout the whole camp, and thouſands of the enemy bit the ground in death. Thoſe that eſcaped out of the camp ſought for ſafety in flight, and were purſued as far as Damaſcus; ſo effectually did Abraham follow his blow, that he reſcued from the ſpoilers every priſoner, and all the goods of which they had plundered the ſacked cities, and utterly deſtroyed the four depredating tyrants."

"It was always my opinion, ſaid the monarch, that Joſeph was deſcended of illuſtrious anceſtors, and your account of Abraham ſufficiently confirms it. Your family, my good old friend, has provided a ſaviour for Egypt in the perſon of Joſeph, and it is the leaſt thing we can do in return, to take care of his father's houſe during the ſcarcity. Go, good old man, and dwell in the land, the beſt of it is before you. And you, Joſeph know it is the will of your king, that you amply provide for all your father's family and appoint their dwelling moſt agreeable to their own inclinations."

The ſeverity of the famine was now felt in every part of the land, and no proviſion was

to be met with but what was drawn from Joſeph's granaries; whereby the kings exchequer became immenſely rich. For firſt he gathered up all the money in Egypt in Exchange for his corn; when money failed, he received their cattle inſtead thereof; and when their cattle were all become the king's property, they brought their ſlaves and bondmen, and exchanged them for corn. Then they ſold every man his landed eſtate to procure bread for their mouths, and at laſt they gave up themſelves for bondmen and bondwomen unto Pharaoh, in conſideration of being fed with neceſſary food. Thus the whole land of Egypt, and all that it contained became Pharaoh's property, and no ſubject had any thing left which he could call his own.

The ſeventh year of the famine elapſed, Joſeph iſſued a proclamation, inviting every perſon to take poſſeſſion of his alienated eſtate, to come and receive ſeed corn at the king's granaries, wherewithal to ſow their fields. Now he returned to every man his horſes, camels, and black cattle, and all that the famine occaſioned them to part with, except their money. Only requiring that the fifth part of the increaſe of all their land ſhould be faithfully delivered up at the royal magazines. But ſurely never were people more aſtoniſhed than at this unexpected reſtitution of their eſtates, and reſtoration of their liberty, after they and all that they had were become the ſole property of

the king. And never was a monarch better pleaſed with the conduct of a miniſter, than Pharoah was to ſee his people, by Joſeph's wiſdom and moderation freed from ſlavery, in a manner which ſecured the laſting dignity and affluence of the crown. To the mutual ſatisfaction of both prince and people, it was eſtabliſhed by an act of ſtate into a law, that the people ſhould enjoy their poſſeſſions unmoleſted, and that the fifth part of all the increaſe ſhould be Pharoah's for ever.

It was now that Sabrina, the wife of Potiphar, was taken ſick unto death; and as ſhe found herſelf confirmed in her virtue, ſhe ventured to requeſt a viſit of Joſeph, that ſhe might have an opportunity to confeſs her folly to him in the preſence of her huſband and implore forgiveneſs for the injuries he had ſuſtained upon her account.

"O Joſeph! ſaid ſhe, it is leſs ſhame to confeſs a crime than be guilty of it. I need not repeat the baſeneſs of my former guilt to you, who have been ſo feelingly ſenſible. I wanted you now that I might unboſom myſelf to you, in the preſence of my worthy lord, before I die. I admire that virtue which made you reſiſt the temptation I laid for you. It has for ſome years been the object of my imitation, and I think I have felt ſomething of its ſweetneſs. I can tell you: that had you complied with my wild and unlawful deſires, you would now have been the object of my

averſion, Joſeph, even as you yourſelf fore-told. But Oh! the virtue and honour were all yours, and the guilt, ſhame and confuſion my own. And can my lord-chancellor indeed forgive the baſeneſs of a woman who then criminally loved him to diſtraction? May Sabrina hope that ſhe dies under the friendſhip of injured Joſeph! That all reſentment is departed from his generous boſom, and that he can freely forgive his moſt violent perſecutor."

"Madam, replied Joſeph, my mind is a ſtranger to reſentment: and was ſo from the firſt, even when I felt moſt the power of your revenge, you was the object of my warmeſt pity. I felt it as an evil of affliction, which it was better to ſubmit to, than to an evil of ſin. I judged that the omnipreſent God would by ſome means bring good out of it to me and therefore I cheerfully endured it. It would, madam, be impious in an high degree, did I forget the means by which my God has advanced me to power, and it would be littleleſs than deviliſh, to retain revenge againſt the inſtruments he might ſee meet to make uſe of. By your means, madam, I was caſt into priſon, where I met with the butler and baker; where alſo I firſt ſaw my lovely Aſenath. By their means, I was made known unto Paraoh, by whoſe goodneſs I was raiſed to power; ſo that from the great good ariſing to me from the little inconvenience I ſuffered through my then miſled miſtreſs, I ſhould be worſe

than an infidel, if I did not from my heart, forgive the lady Sabrina. I rejoiced to her of your virtue returning to its courſe, and your affections ſettled upon their proper object, and now I rejoice to ſee you in this penitent frame of ſpirit; for whoſoever confeſſes and forſakes their ſins, ſhall find mercy."

When Joſeph returned home, he found a poor man at his gate, ſoliciting relief of his ſervants. By his appearance it ſeemed that he had heretofore been bleſſed with better days, for even the ruin was noble. The ſervants had each of them contributed liberally, and amongſt them had made him up a purſe of fifty pieces, and beſides recommended him to the conſideration of their lord.—Joſeph's humanity was ſuch that he never ſhut his door upon the poor and needy; yet ſeldom did he relieve, before he had properly enquired with tenderneſs into the caſe. Always obſerving this rule, to put the ſuppliant to as little pain as poſſible.

The ſtranger being introduced into the governor's preſence, he was deſired to give ſome account of the cauſe of his misfortunes.

"I am by birth, ſaid he an Iſhmaelite, who traded from the land of Gilead to Egypt, It is ſome few years ſince that having greatly increaſed my ſubſtance, and added to the number of my ſervants, I ventured to ſeparate myſelf from the Caravan, with which I uſual-

ly had travelled; ſuppoſing I could make greater expedition when alone, than when tied to the rules of the company. But I ſoon found that he who maketh haſte to be rich, ſhall preſently come to poverty; for the very firſt journey I made with my own houſehold train, I was beſet on a fatal night by a band of thieviſh Arabs, againſt whom I was not able to make head. All my merchandize was ſeized, myſelf and ſervants taken priſoners, and baſely treated whilſt I continued with them. On the third night I found an opportunity of making my eſcape, which I effected, although not without danger. In the night I travelled, being well acquainted with the wilderneſs, and through the day I lurked in ſome loneſome thicket, till I got within the borders of Egypt. When I made the beſt of my way towards the metropolis, expecting to find relief in thoſe who ſtood indebted to me for merchandize before then received.—But alas! I found there was ſuch an univerſal inſolvency among my chapmen, that I could obtain no relief at their hands. The late famine, my lord, diſables many an honeſt man from paying his juſt debts. I have been ſeeking throughout the capital, and all the neighbouring towns, for an amiable young man, an Hebrew, whom I brought down into Egypt and ſold to his lordſhip the general, near twenty years ago. As I am perſuaded, that if he lives, he fills ſome high department; could I meet with him, I

doubt not but I ſhould find a friend in the time of my neceſſity."

"What is your name, my friend ſaid the governor, and what was the name of the young Hebrew?" "My name replied he is Alvah, and my friend's name was Joſeph, the ſon of Jacob." "I am Joſeph, returned the governor. You have found your Joſeph, your young Hebrew, and I will befriend you Alvah. He ſaid and flew to his friend's embrace, ſaying, O my Alvah! my friend, I grieve for your diſtreſſes, yet I rejoice that it is in the power of my hand to help you.—But let me firſt pay my juſt debts, by returning the money you forced me at our parting, Alvah." Here he ordered ſeven hundred pieces to be counted down, and ſaid, I inſiſt upon it if you love me my friend, that you will accept of this as principal and intereſt, without making any words at all about it.—And do give me a juſt ſtate of all the debts owing to you by the Egyptians, and I will be your paymaſter, Alvah." Overwhelmed with gratitude the good old Iſhmaelite could not ſpeak a word. He hardly knew whether the whole was not a dream. At laſt he gave vent to the ſwellings of his heart, by ſhedding a flood of tears. Then ſaid Bleſſed be God, I have found you my ſon, and you are Joſeph ſtill. Riches and grandeur have not divorced virtue from your noble mind.

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